

THE
MONTH

NOVEMBER 1954

AFTER SIXTEEN CENTURIES

St. Augustine of Hippo (354 to 1954)

THOMAS CORBISHLEY

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M. Maritain on Creative Intuition

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The Month is edited from 114 Mount Street, W.1, GROsvenor 2995, and published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 6 & 7 Clifford Street, London, W.1. Subscriptions may be addressed to any bookseller, or, in Great Britain, direct to the publishers; in U.S.A. to British Publications, Inc., 30 East 60th Street, New York 22, N.Y.; in France to W. H. Smith & Son, 248 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 1. The annual subscription is 30s., U.S.A. \$5.

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AFTER SIXTEEN CENTURIES

St. Augustine of Hippo (354 to 1954)

By

THOMAS CORBISHLEY

TO BE UNABLE TO "see the wood for the trees" is regarded as a common and regrettable failing amongst human beings: yet the obverse is probably commoner and much more regrettable. We look at history so much in terms of tendencies, movements, economic influences and the like that we soon come to lose sight of the profound truth that what, in the end, matters, is not the outcome of "history" as such, not the rise and fall of empires, not the operation of great "forces"—the Barbarian Invasions, the Industrial Revolution, the Spread of Communism—but the influence that these factors have on the lives of individual men and women. The great condemnation of Communism and Nazism alike is precisely that both these theories have seen history in terms of mass movements, to which the individual must be sacrificed. But not even the Christian is entirely exempt from this peril. It is, for example, surely a little odd that so many men at different times have been almost obsessed with the thought of the end of the world, forgetting that, for the individual, the world ends with the moment of his death.

St. Augustine himself would be the first to warn us against seeing him as an "historic" figure and nothing else. "Historic" he undoubtedly is; and it is fitting that, as we recall that sixteen centuries have passed since Monica bore this child to Patricius, in a town of North Africa which might but for him have been forgotten to history, we should make some attempt to appraise his contribution to the story of man. But we shall see that this contribution springs from no external achievement, from no

position of authority, from no sensational feature in his experience. Even such achievements as marked his career—the rout of the Pelagians, the resistance to Donatism, the official business of his episcopacy—are not the chief source of our debt to this greatest of the Africans. In the final reckoning, Augustine's supreme gift to mankind is his picture of himself, treated as a sort of working-model of the action of grace upon a human soul.

Even this statement is liable to misinterpretation. Augustine was indeed a great theologian. But if we hope to find in his writings a clear outline of his theological teaching, a synthesis such as was achieved by Aquinas, a *catalogue raisonné* such as we encounter in much modern "theology," we shall be disappointed. That he was not incapable of such treatment is shown by his *De Fide et Symbolo*, a comprehensive theological statement of the Christian Faith delivered within a few years of his conversion before he became a bishop. But Augustine was far too profound a thinker ever to feel that any complete and final statement of theological truth could be arrived at. For to him, the central issue of theology is the relationship between man and his Creator, and whilst the former is so complex that no full analysis of his nature is possible, God, on the other hand, defies analysis by His very simplicity.

What then are we to say of God? If you have understood what you are trying to say, it is not God. If you have been able to understand it, it is something other than God that you have understood. If you have been able to understand it in a way, you have deceived yourself by your very thinking. In a word, this is not He, if you have understood: if it is He, you have not really understood. Why then do you want to speak of something that you have been unable to grasp?

Yet it would be absurd to suggest that Augustine was a theological dilettante, refusing to commit himself to any definite position, a fourth-century Modernist. Anyone who has even a superficial acquaintance with his polemical writings will know that he could state and defend his opinions with an uncompromising rigidity which has misled the unwary into attributing to him extreme and one-sided views based on a selection of texts which fail to take account of the breadth and balance of his whole outlook. He was by temperament a fighter, by training a rhetorician: remarks made in the heat of debate by such a man

are clearly not to be accepted *au pied de la lettre* and treated as the carefully elaborated statements of a purely academic theologian. Whilst therefore theologians of widely differing views have claimed him for their master, the prudent investigator of Augustine's ideas will hesitate to claim that these are to be appreciated from a small selection of brief passages. Many of his lapidary phrases have passed into the traditional currency of theological writing; but they need to be employed with great caution, and interpreted in the light of his own personal history and against the background of the age for which he wrote.

So much of Augustine's thought has entered into our Western outlook that we need to begin by reminding ourselves that he was not of the West as we now understand it. By heredity he sprang from the fierce soil of Africa—the land of Hannibal and Jugurtha, of Apuleius and Septimius Severus, no less than of Tertullian, Cyprian and Perpetua. Rome had come and conquered, but had done little to the land save to impose its legal system and erect its buildings. Some Roman settlers there would be—traders or veterans from the legions—and the rule of Rome would be as obvious as the British Raj in India, and as unpopular. Africa remained to the end one of the most nationalistic and separatist of Rome's provinces, even though the intellectual and wealthy would ape Roman ways and (as Augustine himself was to do) would feel the attraction of the imperial city itself. Latin appears to have become the language of the educated classes even amongst the native Africans. Augustine's father, Patricius, as a member of the local town council and therefore a *fonctionnaire* of the Empire, may have felt a special attraction to the use of Latin. He was, also, as we know, ambitious for his son's academic advancement, and for this reason may have insisted on the use of Latin in his home. At any rate, Augustine later forgot practically all the Punic he knew, though the majority of the native Africans seem to have been bilingual (in Punic and Latin), much as the modern Gibraltarians are in Spanish and English.

When Christianity first penetrated into North Africa we do not know; but we know that in A.D. 180 a group of twelve native Christians were put to death by the Roman proconsul. From that moment dates the history of the Church in North Africa. Before the year 250 we hear of a Council taking place attended by ninety

bishops. Yet again we must beware of thinking of the African Church in this period as a peaceful and settled community of devout worshippers. From the first it was marked by an extreme of rigour, characterized by harsh teaching about the possibility of forgiveness of certain sins after baptism, whilst there is some evidence to suggest that the enthusiasm with which the native Africans embraced the new creed was inspired to some extent by hatred of Rome.¹ This might help to explain why, when Constantine legalized Christianity, the separatist Donatist movement received a great accession of strength.

For at the time when Augustine was born, the Christian Church in Africa seems to have been almost equally divided between the Catholics, loyal to the Bishop of Rome, and the schismatic Donatists. Into the complicated origins of this schism it is unnecessary for us to enter. At bottom, it sprang from the idea that those who, under pressure of persecution, had yielded in any way, were unworthy to be regarded as true Christians, still less could they administer valid sacraments. Again we can see how, in certain cases, hatred of Rome would come in to intensify this bitterness, changing a purely spiritual or ecclesiastical question into a political and secular one.

It was into this situation that Augustine was born on 13 November, 354. Though his mother was a devout, yet far from perfect Christian—there can be little doubt that a certain worldliness entered into her ambitions for her brilliant son—his father was a pagan. Though Augustine's affection for his mother was clearly much greater than any feeling he had for his father, it can hardly be doubted that the latter's example was one of the factors which led to the boy's indifference to the practice of Christianity and his youthful excesses. The story of these is too familiar to need recalling. Nor are they such as to distinguish Augustine from a considerable proportion of the human race. Indeed, in its externals there is something almost conventional about Augustine's story. Education, beginning in his native town of Tagaste, was followed by a spell at a "secondary school" in Madaura, and this in turn by a University career in Carthage. This led to the adoption of an academic profession, as teacher

¹ Cf. *The Donatist Church*, by H. C. W. Frend. Clarendon Press, 1952: pp. 106 sqq.: *St. Augustine and the Donatist Controversy*, by Geoffrey Grimshaw Willis. S.P.C.K., 1950: pp. 9-10.

of "rhetoric" first in Carthage and then in Rome itself. His conversion at Milan, in circumstances unforgettably described by himself, was followed by ordination to the priesthood and later by consecration as bishop, first as auxiliary and then as Metropolitan of Hippo. There is something fitting about the fact that he died as the Vandals were besieging that city in the year A.D. 430.

There are very few people in the ancient world of whom we have such complete knowledge as we have of St. Augustine. Nor is this due merely to the fact that he wrote the *Confessions*. True, these give us both information about the external framework of his experience and elaborate analysis of his mental and spiritual development. But the picture might well remain flat and possibly even unconvincing without the great mass of his other writings. For throughout these, whatever their character,—philosophical or theological treatises, controversial works, sermons, letters—the same great themes recur again and again, deepening and enriching our appreciation of this tremendous soul. Indeed the *Confessions* themselves are little more than the prelude to the story of Augustine as he himself would have thought of it. The drama of his life began, it did not end, in the garden at Milan. The passion of man's life is desire for happiness. This Augustine had sought in the joys of fellowship and the tenderness of human love, in the folly of boyish escapade and the fierce striving after academic success, in the pursuit of knowledge and the quest of religious satisfaction without the restrictions of orthodox Christianity. But his hunt for these things had been all but deliberately a running away from what he suspected to be the unique source of happiness. In the garden the Hound of Heaven caught up with His prey.

From that time forward, Augustine knew that he possessed the answer to the problem of existence—the problem of his own life and the problem of all human seeking. In terms of that answer he could investigate in the *City of God* the complexities of world-history and reduce them to a great simplicity. Where Plato, in the *Republic*, had thought to clarify the ethical issues of individual morality by seeing justice and injustice writ large in the State, Augustine, by a contrary technique, illuminated the processes of wars and politics by revealing them as projections of the processes of individual moral activity. Whatever the social or economic

origins of states, the test of their quality is to be found in the nature of their love. *Fecerunt itaque civitates duas amores duo*. Although it is possible to think of the *City of God* in terms of political philosophy or of a philosophy of history, it is much more a study in human psychology and in the theology of grace. So, again, in his most ambitious theological treatise, the *De Trinitate*, we feel that Augustine devotes, it would seem, much more time to an analysis of the psychological processes of human experience and to a study of certain features of created being in which he finds images of the Blessed Trinity than to a study of the nature of the Godhead and the divine Persons themselves. For whilst he never lost sight of the truth that the only ultimately Real is God, the transcendent, he was none the less certain that we can only begin to appreciate that Reality by seeing it reflected in the manifold variety of created being.

Influenced as Augustine was by the Neo-Platonic mysticism and the Plotinian idea of the flight of the alone to the Alone, especially in his earlier writings, he was far too much of a realist in his knowledge of himself and of others, to suppose that this might be anything but a most exceptional experience—"as if a man were to be touched by some sudden flash of light, only to sink back to the limitations of his nature." There are times indeed when we wonder if he is not too much influenced by the Platonic-Pythagorean shrinking from the body, if traces of the Manichaeism which he professed for nine years do not still cling to his thought. But as we read his sermons and letters, we are impressed with the great sanity and the great humanity of this man, who became such a tremendous lover of God because he had learnt what even an imperfect human love can teach.

What then is it that I love when I am loving thee? Not bodily fairness nor temporal beauty, not the radiance of this light, so dear to our eyes, not the delight of song in richly varied harmony, not the fragrance of flowers and unguents and spices, not manna, not honey, not limbs that give joy to the touch of embracing flesh: it is not this that I love when I love my God. And yet I do love a kind of light, a kind of sound, a kind of scent, a kind of taste, a kind of embrace when I love my God—the light, sound, scent, taste and embrace that I experience within myself: wherein a light dazzles my soul, uncircumscribed by space: a sound echoes unquenched by time, a scent not scattered by the breeze, a taste

undiminished by eating, a clinging embrace not sundered by satiety. This it is that I am loving in loving my God.

For, granted the truth of all that Augustine accuses himself of in the way of sensual excess, it remains obvious that he was no mere sensualist, no casual philanderer pursuing sex wherever he might find it. For fifteen years he remained faithful to his mistress, the mother of Adeodatus—is not the name significant?—and it is surely of this deeply-rooted attachment that he says: *Diligentibus Deum omnia co-operantur in bonum, etiam peccata*. It was because he had experienced love of such lasting intensity, even though the expression of it were sinful, that he could begin to glimpse the tremendous power of divine love and, glimpsing it, could respond. It was in terms of such love that he understood the problem of life.

When therefore he came to wrestle with the central mystery of grace and free-will, he saw the solution, not in terms of two impersonal forces, but in terms of the response of love to the lover. In loving his mistress, he had loved her freely, intensely, passionately. He had been *unable* to shake off the attachment, because he had not wanted to, yet even this not wanting to was something for which he was responsible. Hence he had come to see the profound truth of the statement: *Id quod nos magis delectat, secundum id operemur necesse est*. The necessity to follow the call of the greater attraction did not mean that he was not free in following it. Only, alas, his freedom did not extend to rejecting the attraction.

Then, on a sudden, the spell was broken. Whatever the nature of the experience in the garden, of the result there could be no doubt. He was free in a way he had never experienced before—free because a greater attraction had come to prevail. The attraction came from a sight of something he had been unable to see before. And the right sort of revelation is itself the right sort of attraction. The magnetism of beauty draws the heart of man. *Sine laesione corporis trahitur, amando trahitur*. The pull of an attraction is almost a physical thing. Yet, though it tug, it tugs without physical violence: it is the tug of love.

Augustine had felt that tug in human love and physical desire. Inevitably, when he began to know the power of the grace of God, he interpreted it in the light of his former experience. It

was almost as though he had fallen in love with God. Therefore if we are to understand his teaching about grace, we must see it as somehow akin to the power of love—a power that comes upon a man, often suddenly and as it were inexplicably, yet becoming so much a part of him that he is inspired, enriched, energized in a new way. At its noblest, human love renders a man capable of a generosity and a courage far beyond his normal capacity. It is a truly liberating force. In the teaching of Augustine, grace is the supremely liberating force. The attraction of God, the complete and illimitable good, is so great that nothing less will now satisfy the heart that experiences such attraction. Therefore the Christian who is fully under the spell of God is completely free, set free from those lesser attractions that solicit his will to turn aside to the lesser good, which, being partial, involves by comparison with the perfection of God, some measure of defect and therefore of evil.

It is because Augustine really penetrated to the heart of the matter, because, in an age which saw the lights by which man had steered for centuries dimmed and all but extinguished, he reinterpreted the abiding experience of the human heart in terms of the true light which had come into the world, that he towers above so many, philosophers and theologians alike, who have contented themselves with metaphysical speculation or epistemological analysis. He can argue metaphysics and epistemology with skill and subtlety; but even here his interest is not in the purely intellectual. What concerns him much more is man's interest in knowing at all.

A man cannot love at all that of which he knows nothing. Let us then carefully examine the nature of the love possessed by students. For instance, if one of them hears an unknown significant symbol, such as the sound of some word of which he does not know the meaning, he wants to know what it does mean; that is to say, he wants to know what exactly that is which, by common agreement, will come into his mind when that sound is heard. What he loves is the excellence there is in learning, in which the knowledge of all such signs is included, and the benefit there is in being skilled in these since it is by means of them that human society is capable of mutual communication.

Here, at the natural level, is no arid intellectual, no logician

playing about with terms and symbols in some game which has no purpose beyond itself. For him knowledge is only worth while if it enriches human life. And, at the supernatural level,

Let knowledge be applied as a kind of scaffolding, making it possible for the edifice of charity to rise, to endure for ever, even when knowledge is done away with.

Across the centuries Augustine had joined hands with the tenderest of Roman poets, whose half-line

trahit sua quemque voluptas

he quotes again and again in discussions about grace. Forward he looks to Pascal and our own Newman—Pascal who sought, not the “God of the philosophers and men of learning” but “God experienced by the heart,” Newman, who almost echoes Augustine, when he declares “Unless Thou wert incomprehensible, Thou wouldst not be God.” He stands in the philosophical tradition of Plato and his disciples; he has made significant contributions to Christian doctrine, nor is it without justice that he ranks as the greatest of the Western Fathers. Yet, for all the importance that the Church attaches to the study of these disciplines, they remain, as Augustine himself reminds us, no more than the scaffolding without which, it is true, the edifice of charity might not rise, but which, all too often, is allowed to obscure the very edifice it is meant to serve. His greatness is something at once deeper and simpler. He reminds us that, in the depths of any human experience, a mystery and a glory are to be seen transcending anything that belongs merely to this world of time and space. For the story of God’s love for man is not an affair of logical analysis or theological lore: it is a progressive revelation leading to the fullness of eternal day.

Eternal life is the actual knowing of truth. How wrongheaded and preposterous they are who imagine that their teaching about the knowledge of God will make us perfect, when this is the reward of those who are actually perfect.

POETS AND PAINTERS

M. Maritain on Creative Intuition

By

VINCENT TURNER

IN 1942 M. JACQUES MARITAIN delivered the first set of Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and this ample volume of 422 and xxxii pages is an enlarged edition of them.¹ The production could hardly be better: paper, printing, layout, binding are excellent. There are sixty-eight black-and-white illustrations. The text is a full, a very full, statement by a distinguished thinker of the results of a life-time's pondering of his subject. It is a most impressive performance. There are many pages of beauty and grandeur.

Nevertheless, it is a bewildering book. To one ramifying feature of it an English reader should, I suppose, be indulgent: it is a book conceived and executed in the French rather than the English style of doing these things. The English language, M. Maritain once parenthetically remarks, "makes philosophy miserable." The poor English critic is disarmed in advance. But certainly English philosophical prose is not M. Maritain's climate. It has a tradition of toughness that is not his: it endeavours to be lucid by a constant reference to particulars and to instances, so that a reader shall know as well as possible what is being said; and (but this is to put the same thing in another way) it endeavours to give reasons why a reader should think that what is said is true or probable. M. Maritain is not so pedestrian as this; manner and tone of voice are very different from it. A reader new to his work will need a period of acclimatization.

But books about aesthetics or about the nature of poetic and artistic "insight" and activity belong to a quite special class. What is a poet doing when he writes poetry, or a painter when he paints pictures? What is he trying to communicate, or at least

¹ *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, by Jacques Maritain (The Harvill Press 42s).

to express? What makes him want to do it? One way of looking for answers to these questions is to ponder what the poet or painter in fact does. Not poetry or painting in general, but poems and pictures. Perhaps this is the only way. I think it is—doubtless through a British prejudice—and that not much sense and still less accuracy can come of talk about generalities. Even phrases such as “modern poetry” and “modern art” are phrases calculated to leave the impression that there is some one kind of activity or intention corresponding to the one phrase: they iron out the marked and crucial differences there are between the works produced. In France these differences are obvious enough; in England they are riotous.

But such a patient, modest, empirical, inductive method is not the method of the philosopher of art. It is left to the historian and the critic, a lower order of being. Philosophy of art, as it is already traditionally conceived, is conducted at a much higher altitude. Your philosopher does not overmuch bother himself with looking at particular pictures or responding to particular poems; rather does he tell a story about beauty or the creative impulse, creative subjectivity, aesthetic emotion, or whatever it be. Often the story is a beautiful one: dignified, moving, solemn, hierophantic.

But it is not altogether clear what the reader is to do about it, just as it is not altogether clear what is the impulse that leads a man to tell these stories. Are we to believe them? Soaring as high as they do above particular poems and paintings, they soar equally high above the available evidence for their truth or falsity. Even when the stories are lucidly told, the reader may well think, there appears to be little reason why we should believe them, because they seem to have little to do with their alleged subject-matter. This, perhaps, is the chief of the reasons why philosophy of art is the dreary subject it has come to be.

To this philosophical manner M. Maritain is, of course, no exception. Empirically-minded he has never been, but a Himalayan climber in a realm of essences. In the present volume there is a most curious footnote, in which some poor German is sharply admonished for “seeking proofs and signs of that dehumanization of culture in great modern artists and in the very creativity of modern art (which, being spiritual activity, transcends the cultural environment).” Does it indeed? But

M. Maritain is a convinced believer in an inner necessity in the history of poetry and painting, in an inner dynamism of these activities in themselves. He happens to believe, too, and no less firmly, that this inner necessity has been revealed in its purity in France in the last half-century or so. About this he is quite explicit.

What, then, is the account that M. Maritain gives? I cannot summarize here a difficult book of over four hundred pages, but roughly (very roughly) and reduced to essentials it is this. The central theory is that art and poetry flourish only where there is creative intuition, an intuition that has its roots in a spiritual preconscious and blooms only if this preconscious is liberated from the perils of rational construction. This creative intuition is "an obscure grasping of his [the artist's] own Self and of things in a knowledge through union or through connaturality which is born in the spiritual unconscious and which fructifies only in the work." It is, of course, a nonconceptual knowing; it is a special kind of knowing through connaturality that comes about by means of emotion. Not, however, any emotion but a very special sort of emotion; not "brute or merely subjective emotion" (not, that is, what is usually meant by the word emotion) but "emotion as *form*, which, being one with the creative intuition, gives form to the poem, and which is *intentional*, as an idea is, or carries within itself infinitely more than itself." It is this creative emotion that is the proper medium of poetic knowledge, and Mr. T. S. Eliot, who is severe on this matter of emotion in poetry, is rebuked for negligence of a vital distinction. The knowledge, then, is a special kind of affective knowledge. Beauty, the "end beyond the end" of poetry is discussed in two chapters (V and VI), and the working of the spiritual preconscious through the "illuminating image" in chapter VIII.

I cannot, as I said, summarize so big and difficult a book. In a volume of so large an amplitude there are, as one would expect of M. Maritain, many passages of moving eloquence and beauty, and of penetration; the discussion of magic and poetic knowledge (chapter VII) is an instance among many. But the work resists summary for a graver reason and one that I have already touched upon and think it well to develop. M. Maritain does his best, it is clear, to be lucid: his theses are elaborated, amplified, contrasted with others, compared with analogues; nothing that words can do is left undone. But there is one thing that is not

done: there is no discussion of examples, of particular poems or pictures. The lack of this kind of interest has serious consequences. Even at the cost of some repetition a critic must, I think, underline and illustrate what some of these are.

Nature, for the painter [writes M. Maritain], is no longer a separate thing-in-itself, but Nature, in some of her inner aspects, has reached the heart of subjective creativity, as a germ of that object which is the work to be born. Accordingly the painter (who henceforth is simply nothing if he lacks poetic vision) sees deeper into Things, though in the dark of Things and of his own Self. He grasps enigmatically an aspect or element of the mystery of the universe of matter, in so far as this aspect or element is meant to fructify into a construction of lines or colours. And because subjectivity has become the very vehicle to penetrate into the objective world, what is thus looked for in visible Things must have the same kind of inner depth and inexhaustible potentialities for revelation as the Self of the painter. As a result, modern painting at its best attains, while remaining strictly painting, to a sort of ontological vastness, and to a superior—though paradoxical for logical reason—degree of intellectuality.

This is a comparatively straightforward passage. Why, then, does a reader, at any rate an English reader, feel restless and slightly bored? There are, I think, two reasons, but they are interconnected. The one is that, in the absence of particular illustrative matter, the prose is so loose, so abstract, so lofty, so inflated, that one finds that on reflection one does not after all know quite what it is that M. Maritain wants to say. Or to put it another way, his description would fit most possible states of affairs. This impression is confirmed, in the second place, by the judicious insertion of qualifying phrases whose effect is to make it still more difficult to know how to set about testing the truth or probability of the passage. M. Maritain would appear to be making it impossible, and impossible in principle, to imagine which works it is meant to be applicable to and which not. As always, such a procedure tends to evacuate the meaning.

Sometimes, to put it boldly, not only does one not know what M. Maritain means but one is tempted to cease to care.

Let us say, then, that the prime and most basic intentional value in the poem is the poetic sense, because the poetic sense is closest to the creative source—a meaning which immediately signifies the

inhabited subjectivity of the poet as revealed in the night of nonconceptual emotive intuition. The poem receives its essence (that is, its intuitive communicativeness and power of delighting the intellect) and its existence before the mind through the poetic sense—either purely and simply (in the case of the poem strictly so called) or in a merely inchoative way (in the case of the drama). . . . The proper effect of the action is to transfer poetic knowledge, from its own original state or level—where things and the Self are indivisibly grasped together, through emotion, and in darkness—to a more objective and more universal state or level, where creative knowledge is still, to be sure, unable to exist in terms of conceptual and logical reason (it exists in terms of action), but is disengaged from the night—the fecund and creative night—of subjectivity. Here we have to do with a process of relative depersonalization. . . .

I have been trying to illustrate what earlier I complained of, namely a deficient sense of the particular. It is a deficiency that rots all this enterprise, and I must, unfortunately, harp on it. For it simply won't do, for example, to lump together "the inner struggles of Francis Thompson and Hopkins, Verlaine and Max Jacob, Milosz and Léon Bloy, Eliot, Claudel, and Péguy" as if they are somehow instructive as "an essential part of the spiritual experience of modern poetry." Similarly it is surely an inanity to say that "even impressionists could not produce in painting an equivalent for imagist poetry." Heaven help us, they weren't even trying to: they had a different sort of interest and a different sort of love. M. Maritain would do better if he forgot the patter about creative aims that has proliferated in the last half-century and, instead, looked, looked with his eyes, at what it is that Renoir, for instance, was doing, in his impressionist period or out of it.

"Patter" is an abusive word. I use it because the context of this particularly silly remark is instructive. M. Maritain writes (*ibid.*) that

whereas the image and the concept belong to two different realms, the realm of the senses and that of the intellect, sensation and natural appearances, on the contrary, pertain to the same general order—both relate to the senses. As a result modern painting . . . could not liberate sensation from natural appearances as completely as modern poetry has liberated the image from the concept.

Impressionists were most assuredly not trying to liberate sensation from natural appearances: they loved them far too much

and delighted in them. But I think that, to judge from M. Maritain's tone in this and many another similar passage and in spite of his criticism of abstract art, we are correct in thinking that he considers this incomplete liberation to be a not altogether good thing, to be some sort of interference with the "poetic sense" and "creative subjectivity."

But now we begin to know where we are. It is a world somewhat less respectable than "*philosophia perennis*" or Thomism or metaphysics. This is the sort of patter that may be read anywhere in art journalism over the last few decades. "Liberation" is an important and hard-worked word in M. Maritain's vocabulary; it has also been an important word in most writing about modern art for many years. There is indeed—it is a matter to which I shall return—a singularly close parallelism between the elaborate edifice that M. Maritain constructs and the fashionable art propaganda of the last half-century.

But what are we to make of M. Maritain's edifice? There are no obvious tests for this kind of story. In fact, as I have already suggested, there is no testing of it open to us at all. But if I am right, we are here confronted with a most serious consideration in logic, indeed a rock on which, as a story descriptive of activities exemplified in poems and people, this story wrecks itself. As a story it has internal consistency and it touches experience at some points, although the range of experience that it concentrates on is unduly narrow and, as it seems to me, arbitrarily selected: romantic and post-romantic poetry and painting of the School of Paris. But how can one find out if it is a true or a probable story? It is difficult to know how even to start finding out. May I again illustrate the nature of this difficulty by a passage the general import of which is relatively clear? In the production of a modern poem, says M. Maritain,

the poet is intent on the intuitive pulsions stirred by poetic intuition in the region of the imagination. There, in the preconscious life of the intellect, the images, instead of being used for the birth of ideas in the process of abstraction, are moved and quickened by poetic intuition, under the light of the Illuminating Intellect: and the unconceptualizable intelligibility involved in poetic intuition passes through them in an *intentional* or immaterial manner, so that they are made into the vehicles of an intelligible meaning, which will never terminate in a concept, and can remain implicit, even some-

times undetermined, but still is an intelligible meaning, capable of obscurely touching and moving the intellect. And it is from the imaginal-emotional pulsions, and the intelligibility conveyed by the images, that the poet receives the supreme organizing law of his words; it is with respect to these pulsions that he makes concepts and words connected with one another. He sometimes even completely dispenses with explicit concepts, and passes immediately from the images to the words.

Here, then, as it appears to me, is the fatal flaw, and fatal in point of logic, of all this theorizing. Comparatively clear though the passage is, there are many different states of affairs of which it could be proffered as a descriptive explanation. But can one point to a particular poem that demands this sort of story and say that it is because it demands it that we call it poetry at all, and to another that rejects it and say that it is because it rejects it that we refuse to call it poetry? The blunt answer is surely that we cannot and cannot hope to do. But if this is the case, if, that is, we cannot say what would confirm it and what would not, is it quite so clear what is the meaning that M. Maritain would convey? Is it, then, quite certain that we have to do with an intelligible meaning at all? I think it is not, and that this uncertainty is the characteristic of the bulk of writing about philosophy of art that makes the subject the strange one it is and so wearisome. But it is just what one would expect. Even if he be a philosopher, a man cannot afford to fly so high above the continuous consideration of particular examples and be sure of talking sense. If language is to be meaningful, it must pay regard to its communications. Roger Fry was indeed no metaphysician. He could be very muddled and very wrong-headed, even perverse. He did incline to use some words, like, for instance, plasticity, simply as an exclamation of approbation. But he made a habit of pointing to particular paintings, and to passages in them, to illustrate, or rather to convey, his meaning. In consequence we knew what it was that we were asked to agree or to disagree with.

It has perhaps to be confessed, however, that the impulse or interest that propels a man to the theories about poetry and art such as are currently called philosophy of art and such as M. Maritain enunciates in this volume is an interest of a very special kind. Clearly it satisfies some deeply-rooted need, be this intellectual or

emotional or aesthetic. Whatever the need is, it is equally clearly not any desire for a closer understanding of poems or pictures themselves or indeed for any close commerce with them; they remain remote. It is very characteristic that, although M. Maritain's book carries sixty-eight illustrations and a coloured frontispiece, not one is ever referred to in the text: none is either discussed or adduced as evidence for a point made; we have to content ourselves with one indication of the quite general relevance of sections of them; it is not in the least clear precisely what in particular they are intended to illustrate. Similarly the book carries one hundred and seventy-five "texts without comment," extracts of poetry and prose, that are only intermittently and in a general way referred to and whose exact relevance is likewise not at all clear. An erosion of meaningfulness is surely inevitable.

No doubt texts and illustrations are designed to illustrate in a general way M. Maritain's general argument about the general history and nature of poetry and painting and of "aesthetic experience." But my complaint is that this won't do. What indeed are these things "in general"? Perhaps art and poetry are for M. Maritain, as for very many others, simply occasions, or springboards, for the satisfaction of an urge to theorizing whose motive force is elsewhere. Perhaps it is an urge to the construction of theories that of themselves afford emotional or aesthetic satisfaction. Undoubtedly there are many thinkers who find a deep and genuine fulfilment in highly generalized speculation well above the level of any vulgar empirical considerations, and who find but meagre satisfaction in the scrutiny and pondering of particular facts and things in their complex particularity. Goethe thought that theory is grey and life green, and so do I; but there are others who think the opposite. Unluckily poems and paintings are, inescapably, particular things, and just as only they are the evidence for a hypothesis or the material for a theory, so only they are the clues to the meaning of one.

This is bold criticism of a writer so distinguished and established, and M. Maritain moves with consummate ease among his high abstractions. But for all the pontifical assurance of his manner, his reader will do well to remind himself all the time that his subject-matter is what poets write and painters paint, not in general (whatever this may mean) but in particular. This being the case, it is not reassuring to note that nowhere in

M. Maritain's ample volume is there any evidence of any personal response either to poetry or to painting. Beyond doubt he must love some works not with an undifferentiated generalized love but with a love of special predilection; but he does not reveal it. The "texts without comment" show wide reading, of course, and make a better anthology than does the set of illustrations. The illustrations follow the customary round, so fashionable and so chic (although a trifle dated), of works that it is a mark of cultivation to appreciate, and it need not be said that the canonical modern paintings (with a reservation in the case of abstract painting) are those of the School of Paris. One longs for a touch of idiosyncrasy. But although M. Maritain can make the quite astonishing declaration that "the least bit of modern painting, when it is simply good, awakens in us deeper emotion and resonance, and delight, and love, than many masterpieces of the past," for the no less astonishing reason that modern painting is bitten with poetry and has liberated the poetic sense, he will not take the trouble, even here, to elucidate what he means by the consideration of a particular work or two. But in fact, even with regard to modern painting, he is much less interested in the individual works, I think, than in what some of its practitioners and others say about it.

Like many another writer on the philosophy of art—like, for example, this year's lecturer on the same Mellon Foundation, Sir Herbert Read—M. Maritain does not so much look at pictures or attend to poems as give his mind to the ideas and feelings that are or are said to be responsible for them. Instead of looking long and searchingly at Eastern art he reads his Coomaraswamy and his Rowley; in the "modern movement" he is guided not very much by his eyes or by reflection on what his eyes see but very much indeed by the spate of writing about it, by the theories and manifestoes about artistic aims, with which recent years have been deluged. The writing may be done by admirers or critics; it may be done by artists themselves, Mondrian, for instance, or Kandinsky. The American anthology, *Artists on Art*, has also been an important source book. There are drawbacks to this method. What an artist says about his work is always to be weighed, but it may be wildly off the mark and completely misleading: it is not his business to talk about what he does, and even if he has the desire to talk scrupulously about it he may not

have the equipment. He may indeed talk nonsense, as Kandinsky does, and this source of nonsense (*On the Spiritual in Art*) I single out because, although M. Maritain criticizes both it and its author, it is of a type that he takes, I think, far too seriously and is inclined to swallow whole and entire.

This again is serious. For in spite of all the panoply of philosophical construction in M. Maritain's most magisterial manner, in spite of the gentility and the atmosphere of a world of essences and of timelessness, the assured pronouncements about the Advent of the Self, of Subjectivity, of Liberation to Creative Freedom and the rest, correspond to little in the impulses and feelings and reasons that have as a matter of fact moved modern poets and painters to produce the sort of work that they have produced. But they do tally very closely with the propaganda (I mean the propaganda of advertising) that some of them and of their advocates have put out about themselves and their aims.

These painters [M. Maritain tells us] have been confronted with a growing difficulty inseparable from the advent of modern painting: namely the fact that, in proportion as the creativity of the spirit strives for greater and greater liberation in order for the Self to be revealed in the work, Nature discloses greater obstacles, or rather demands from poetic intuition a ceaselessly growing power, in order for things to be grasped, and expressed in the work, without hampering or thwarting the simultaneous expression of subjectivity and the freedom of the creative spirit. What was twenty years ago an invaluable conquest over naturalism will seem now still tainted with naturalism. Any representation of natural appearances is seen as an obstacle to the free creativity of the spirit. And it is, in actual fact, so long as it has not yet been purified and transfigured in the pungent night of creative freedom. . . .

This history M. Maritain represents as "an essential necessity of growth made more exacting by self-awareness." There is in fact no necessity about it whatever, nor is the story anything like so tidy, so simple, or so genteel. Nor, I fear, does it "transcend the cultural environment" in the very least.

On two occasions M. Maritain descends from his high empyrean to conduct a closer discussion of particular things—not, of course, works but movements. He scrutinizes Surrealism and Abstraction. Both discussions are sensible and good. Neither is incisive nor very profound, and the latter is far from getting to

the root of the matter. They are refreshing interludes. It is, after all, like feeling fresh air from an opened window to hear M. Maritain commenting that "practising scales is not giving a concert."

This remark is not altogether flippant. I am not confident that I know after all why it is that books on the philosophy of poetry and the visual arts are as tedious and as unilluminating as they habitually are. Part of the reason, as it seems to me, I have underlined heavily: it has to do with the high altitude from which the subject is surveyed, with the fact that there is little or no concern to maintain communications with actual works of art, and with the consequential evacuation of the meaning of the assertions that are made. But some part of the reason lies, I think, in the reverent solemnity, the awed tone of voice, the hush, that characterizes these speculations. It is firmly believed that there is something especially solemn and sacred about the activities of poets and painters and sculptors. Is there? A dash of empirical sense would indeed have served M. Maritain well: it would, in the ways I have tried to indicate, have put us in some possession of the means of controlling and testing his assertions and *ipso facto* of the clues to his meaning; but it might also have made him less solemn than he is and more matter-of-fact in his approach and his manner, more alive to actualities. After all, Plato, too, a revered master, was alert to the world we live in and was, accordingly, salted by a considerable sense of humour.

My criticism has been severe. It has been criticism not only of M. Maritain but also of philosophy of art as it is customarily done. There will be many for whom such philosophy is a worthwhile and rewarding pursuit. To them I would wholeheartedly commend this result of a lifetime's reflection and speculation. One may have grave doubts, logical and other, about this kind of enterprise—my own misgivings are graver than ever—but there is no doubt whatever that, once we suspend disbelief and accept this tradition of the philosophy of art, this work of M. Maritain's takes a very high place indeed. He ranks with the greatest of his predecessors and is greater than most of them, and his book deserves all the solicitude that his publishers have lavished on it. It is, as I have said, a most impressive performance. It is also, in itself, a work of great and serene beauty.

ST. NICHOLAS VON FLUE

By

E. I. WATKIN

IF DURING HIS LATER LIFE Nicholas von Flue had eaten and drunk like other men, Switzerland as an independent State would probably not exist today. There are few saints whose lives can be seen so clearly as his as determined in detail by a unique vocation. And St. Nicholas' vocation was nothing less than to save the Swiss confederation from imminent danger of dissolution. When the greater part of the world was involved in the agonies and destruction of two world wars, Switzerland remained an oasis of peace and humane living. This was due under God to the peasant and hermit she venerates as her national saint and saviour. I propose to tell the story of his life and show how it was lived and ordered in view of this vocation.

Nicholas was born on 21 March 1417 not far from the Lake of Lucerne, in Obwalden, a sub-canton of Unterwalden. Unterwalden was one of the three forest cantons, the other two being Uri and Schweiz, which had asserted their independence in the thirteenth century and formed a league for mutual defence. Schweiz indeed would give its name to the entire confederation. The following century the league was joined by Lucerne, Zürich, Glarus, Zug and Berne.

Nicholas' parents were Heinrich and Emma von Flue, his father a well-to-do peasant belonging to one of the most respected families in the canton. For these forest cantons were communities of peasants with no higher social class to rule over them, peasant democracies, in fact, though, as always, wealth bestowed power and perverted justice. Nicholas' parents, however, were as irreproachable as wealthy, devout in the practice of their religion. Saints are rarely the product of bad or religiously indifferent homes. He did not receive an education such as we understand it today. He could not read or write. But he was brought up to work on the land, to perform his civil and political duties, to

think, control himself and pray, an education surely more worthy the name than much that passes as such at present.

These forest cantons, like the city-states of antiquity, were direct democracies. Every male citizen attended the cantonal assembly, the Landsgemeinde, where the voting was by show of hands. Here the executive and judicial officers of the canton were elected. Indeed, this direct democracy still survives in Unterwalden. From the age of fourteen Nicholas attended the assembly and voted. He soon acquired a reputation for integrity and shrewd intelligence, and while still a young man was elected a councillor, a member of an assembly which no doubt acted as a committee of the Landsgemeinde, and a judge. He thus learned and displayed in the school of practice the knowledge and judgment he must possess and be known to possess before he could do the work appointed him.

The citizen was also a soldier. From the age of sixteen Nicholas was liable to military service. He took part in two wars. The first was a civil war waged against Zürich by the other cantons, a long-drawn-out struggle which continued with intervals from 1436 to 1450. Zürich had even allied herself with the hereditary foe of the confederation, the Duke of Austria. In the field, as in peace, Nicholas' commanding abilities brought him to the fore. He became successively squadron leader, ensign and captain. He was, as we should put it, on the staff when in 1446 at Ragaz, 1,100 Swiss defeated 5,000 Austrians, and the levies of Obwalden distinguished themselves. The second war was waged by Papal invitation against Duke Sigismund of the Tirol, who had been excommunicated for his aggression upon the rights of the Bishop of Brixen, the mystic and philosopher Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa. The enemy had occupied a convent of Dominican nuns in the Katherinenthal. The Swiss proposed to act like the allies in the late war against Monte Cassino, storm the convent and destroy it with its church. After prayer before a crucifix, Nicholas persuaded his compatriots to abandon their design, promising them that within three days the enemy would evacuate the position. His prophecy was fulfilled. That he prevailed with these rough troops is proof of the moral ascendancy he already possessed with his countrymen.

Though Nicholas accepted the obligation of military service as a matter of course, he has left on record his disapproval of aggres-

sive warfare waged for territory or plunder. To defend liberty against an aggressor, however, his people must fight bravely. In any case non-combatants, women and children in particular, must be spared. Though this prohibition might seem a moral commonplace, it was too little regarded in medieval warfare and its application under modern conditions condemns any major war as immoral.

The witness of men who were his companions in his youth given under oath in view of possible canonization, depicts the young farmer as a cheerful and hardworking man, friendly to all, but allowing no word or act morally reprehensible to pass unrebuked. No prig, however, or spoilsport. On the contrary, he must have taken his part in the games and dances. Otherwise he could not have been the popular man he was.

But, as the same evidence informs us, from early youth Nicholas showed another and an extraordinary side of his character, severe mortification and the practice of protracted prayer, solitary and contemplative. On his return from a hard day's work he would retire to some lonely spot and there pass hours in prayer. Even in the field his rosary was a constant companion. And already his fasts were rigid. On Fridays at first, later four days a week, he fasted and, of course, throughout Lent. But these fasts were fasts indeed. He ate nothing but a piece of bread or a few dried pears. When his parents objected, he replied that it was God's will. But his health did not suffer. We hear of no illness before that of which he died. On this meagre diet he was able to perform the hard labours of the peasant, his official and judicial duties, his military service, and cut deep into the hours of rest with his solitary devotion. This imperious *attrait*, obeyed without hesitation, was preparing him for his life as a hermit and his preternatural fast.

This devotion was rewarded and encouraged by graces of mystical prayer and symbolical visions. When still quite a youth, one evening he saw on the spot where later his hermitage would be built a lofty tower rising to the clouds. He understood it as God's invitation to approach Him by a perfect life.

It may surprise us that with these dispositions and graces the young man did not embrace some form of religious life, did not become a hermit, monk, or secular priest. Instead, without, so far as we know, any conflict or uncertainty, he married.

Evidently the same interior guidance which invited him to perfection and contemplative prayer bade him remain in the world, lead the life of his forebears and become the father of a family. For only because he was one of themselves, a man whose thorough competence in every aspect of their life had been tested over many years, would his people be prepared to accept later his extraordinary vocation and listen to the advice of one whose worldly wisdom and holiness were equally certain.

To fulfil his vocation, therefore, Nicholas must be the head of a family, the successful farmer, the councillor, the deputy, the judge and the captain as well as the hermit, the contemplative and the faster. This unlettered peasant indeed was to fulfil Plato's ideal of the philosopher-king descending from his vision of eternal reality to manage the affairs of his city-state. From the summits of prayer he would play a decisive part in the history of his people. And to do this effectively, like Plato's guardian, he must be trained for many years by the simultaneous practice of prayer and mortification and performance of all the duties of life in the world, domestic, agricultural, social, political, judicial and military.

About the age of thirty, no later at any rate than 1447, Nicholas married the daughter of a farmer on the other side of Lake Sarnen, Dorothea (Dorothy) Wiss. To receive his bride he built near his father's house a new farmhouse. As we shall see, she was worthy of her husband. In her less spectacular fashion she gave proof of the same heroic holiness which is selfless service of God. The couple lived together twenty years, and became the parents of ten children, five sons and five daughters. They prospered. The eldest son and the second or possibly third son reached the highest position in the canton, the office of Landamann. The youngest son became priest of Nicholas' parish, Sachseln. The son of his eldest daughter became like his grandfather a hermit and died in 1559 with the repute of sanctity. Many of his descendants achieved honourable careers not only in Switzerland but even abroad, and the family name has survived to this day.

We do not know Nicholas' motive for refusing the highest cantonal office, that of Landamann. It may have been the growing urgency of a call elsewhere. In any case, it was an instance of flagrant injustice which finally drove him from the judicial bench, a proof that with sinful humanity the crime of Naboth's

vineyard is as possible under democracy as under absolute monarchy. A poor peasant, obliged to borrow from a wealthy neighbour, pledged his garden as security for the loan. By dint of hard labour, screwing and scraping, he was able to repay his debt. His creditor, however, coveting the garden, pretended he had bought it. When the case was heard the majority of the judges favouring wealth, adjudged the garden to the rich man. In vain did Nicholas leave his seat on the bench to testify in the poor man's favour. Henceforward he would no longer be party to such unjust administration of justice. He resigned his judgeship and at the same time retired from public life. It was in 1465.

During these later years the divine call had become more insistent. The symbolic visions by which his subconscious translated the pressure of the Spirit upon his soul pointed in one direction. Three noblemen appeared to him, the three Divine Persons. The first of the three asked him, "Nicholas, will you give yourself body and soul into our power?" Ignorant of their identity, he replied: "I give myself to none save God Almighty, whom I would serve with body and soul." Thereupon they broke into laughter and promised that, if he would loyally persevere in God's service, he would bear in eternity the banner of heaven's victorious army. Another day when he was in a meadow tending cattle and was rapt in prayer, he saw a white and fragrant lily come out of his own mouth and rise to the sky. Just then his animals passed him and he turned his eyes away for a passing moment to look with admiration at his finest horse. He saw the lily bend down to earth to be devoured by the horse. The vision symbolized the threat of his worldly possessions to his heavenly vocation.

It was during these years that his eldest son, who had left his father clearing ground on the mountain side, heard him cry out, and when he turned, saw him rolling down the slope into a thicket of thorns, where he lay motionless and unconscious. His son carried him into shelter and tended his wounds. When Nicholas came to he said, "The devil has played me a dirty trick, but it was the will of God." Was the assault truly Satanic, or the subconscious operation of the old Adam in Nicholas himself resisting the invasion of Divine grace? We have no need to decide. In either case the spiritual significance is the same.

So the call of God's voice to leave all for Him became ever

clearer, louder, more pressing. A hermit Nicholas must be. But the attachment to all that was most dear on earth, wife, children, home and the fields he cultivated, drew him back. He entered the dark night of the soul. As he told a friend later, he had no rest and to his weary and tormented spirit everything was a burden, even his dearest. But he held fast in his determination to do the will of God. No one was admitted to the secret of his purpose except his confessor, the parish-priest of Kern, and later another priest, Heini Amgrund. But the day came when he must inform his wife and children. His family, it is true, was amply provided for. The elder children were already adults and the farm was flourishing. But what of his duty to his wife? Would she indeed give the indispensable consent? She had just borne his tenth child. Moreover, she would be exposed to the hostility and scorn of relatives and neighbours, not least the wealthy transgressors whose misdeeds Nicholas had denounced. In particular, Nicholas' eldest son, an ambitious youth who feared that the odium and ridicule attaching to his father's action would prejudice his career, was bitterly opposed to him. Under such circumstances the vast majority of wives, even devout Catholic wives, would have refused their consent, and would not have allowed their marriage to be broken up by what was so obviously a religious delusion. Dorothy was made of different stuff. However she must suffer she recognized that God was calling her husband and she would not stand between him and the divine call. Truly an heroic woman. She gave her consent, and, four months after his child's birth, Nicholas, having gathered the family round him for parting words and blessing, left his home for ever. It was the Feast of St. Gall, 16 October 1467.

Even so, can we reasonably approve Nicholas' action? Could it be in truth God's will for him? Was not His will rather signified by his duties and responsibilities as husband and father? In the case of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, indeed 9999 out of 10,000, this would be true. Nicholas' vocation would not be theirs. But God has not called these 9999 to leave their family ties for the life of religion. He did call Nicholas, and Nicholas obeyed.

That the call was genuine is not sufficiently guaranteed by Nicholas' personal conviction, which might have been mistaken, even though it was supported by the approval of his confessor,

who equally might have been mistaken. A vocation so extraordinary is guaranteed by the evident facts of his later life, that it was the indispensable condition of the unique vocation that would be his, the unique historical achievement he was to accomplish, to save, no less, the Swiss confederation. For only the hermit, not the farmer and father of a family, would have possessed a religious influence sufficiently powerful, would have been the object of such reverence from his fellow-countrymen, that his advice could have prevailed over a bitter conflict of passions and interests.

For the moment, however, it seemed as though Nicholas' choice must have the opposite result, that it made such future action altogether impossible. For his relatives, kinsmen and neighbours, and generally the people of Obwalden, far from being edified were scandalized. Nicholas was guilty in their eyes of immoral conduct, indeed of a freak hardly sane. First his duties as a citizen, now his duties as the head of a family, had been sacrificed to a delusion, a whim masquerading as a divine call. Had religious mania formed part of the vocabulary of the fifteenth century, Nicholas would undoubtedly have been dismissed as a religious maniac.

Nicholas, moreover, convinced, naturally enough, that he must cut himself off completely from his former home, determined to leave Switzerland and settle in Alsace, where an unorganized association of contemplatives flourished, drawn from all ranks and occupations and known as the Friends of God. He therefore made his way to Basle and on the evening of the second day out came in sight of an Alsatian township named Liechthal. He was thus on the verge of abandoning the place where the work must be accomplished for which his whole life was a preparation.

But God intervened. The lightning flashes of a tempest seemed to him to wrap Liechthal in flames. And a friendly peasant, himself a Friend of God, warned him not to settle in a land where his countrymen had made themselves detested by their marauding forays. Better return to his own people. To clinch all, as he slept in the open field behind a hedge a ray of brilliant light flashed down from heaven and pierced his body, as though a knife had been plunged into his entrails. It left him with the conviction that he must live his hermit's life in his homeland

among the people from whom he had parted. It also left him incapable of eating and drinking for the twenty years he had yet to live.

Turning homewards Nicholas reached his farm at dead of night. He would not enter nor make himself known, but passed the rest of the night in a cowshed and slipped out before anyone had risen. He climbed to an Alpine meadow which formed part of the property. There he spent a week in prayer among the thickets. He was then discovered by a party of hunters which included his brother Peter. His sole request was to see his confessor, Oswald Isner of Kern. When the priest arrived Nicholas asked if he might continue the complete abstinence from food he had already practised for eleven days. Isner, seeing that Nicholas though extremely thin, wellnigh skin and bone, was nevertheless in good health, said he might do so unless he endangered his life.

In a vision Nicholas saw four rays of light with the appearance of burning tapers shining in a locality called Ranft. It was the sign that this must be the place of his hermitage. He put up a shack of boughs, to be soon replaced by a two-storied hermitage erected by the inhabitants of the valley who had been impressed by his holiness. It was on the doorstep of his old home, which could be reached in a quarter of an hour.

So near, yet so far. It might seem that this local proximity to those he had left would have nourished a longing to go back to them wellnigh intolerable. On the contrary. The extraordinary vocation of a hermitage among his own people was made possible by a grace no less extraordinary. Never, so he tells us himself, did he experience the least temptation, the least desire, to return to his family.

The natural occasions for a regret never felt must have been many during the first years when the chapel attached to the hermitage had no priest to serve it and on Sundays and feasts Nicholas must hear Mass at his parish church of Sachseln. But he was never confined to the hermitage. In the earlier years he would even go on pilgrimage as far even as Einsiedeln. His life was austere indeed. He cut down his sleep to two or three hours, rising at midnight to pass the rest of the night in prayer. His room lacked table or chair. His bed was a log of wood. Summer and winter alike he wore nothing but a rough brown habit, went

barefoot and bareheaded, barefoot even over ice and snow. His friend was a fellow-hermit named Ulrich, whose cell was close by.

It was not long before the hostility of relatives and neighbours and generally of the Unterwaldeners changed to veneration. Undoubtedly the prime reason for their revised estimate was Nicholas' ability to dispense with food, a visible mark, they were certain, of his holiness and the seal of God upon his new life. Today we know that this incapacity to eat is not necessarily a sign of holiness. Whereas the Son of Man came eating and drinking, this abnormal fasting has been found in the lives of persons who, though, I believe, always devout Christians—they have not all been Catholics—have not, so far as we can judge, attained the standard of holiness required for canonization. In the case of Nicholas, however, there can be no doubt that it was due to a special intervention of God, whatever its psychophysical mechanism. For his work could be achieved only if his countrymen not only approved of his hermitical vocation, though it had involved leaving wife and children, but regarded Nicholas as the saint he was. The importance attached by the public to the fast, that, in fact, his countrymen made it the criterion of Nicholas' sanctity, is proved by the fact that for an entire month sworn agents of the cantonal government kept strict watch around the hermitage to make sure he was not receiving any food. Had he been detected in a fraud, so Abbot Trithemius believed, the rough Swiss peasants would have killed the impostor on the spot. Assured that the fast was genuine they venerated the saintly "Brother Claus."

The suffragan of Nicholas' diocesan, the Bishop of Constance, put him to another test, similar to that to which St. Simeon the Stylite was put when commanded to come down from his pillar. The Bishop asked Nicholas what in his opinion was best and most meritorious in the Christian life. When he replied obedience, he was bidden to eat a sop of bread soaked in blessed wine. He obeyed, but at the cost of such agonies that he was never again asked to eat anything. Nicholas, however, was the last man to advertise a singularity. The inquisitive were put off with "God knows." And when an Abbot greeted him with the words, "You, then, are the man who boasts that for years no food has passed his lips," "I have never said," was his reply, "and do not say

now that I eat nothing." But everyone knew it was true. To his confessor he confided that when he heard Mass he received nourishment mysteriously from the Blessed Sacrament.

Soon the hermitage was besieged by visitors, many in genuine need of help, his advice or prayer, others merely curious, others out to catch him like his Master in his talk. The authorities, in fact, were obliged to make regulations controlling the crowd. Nicholas' charity, however, did not allow him to place his own peace and devotions before the needs of his fellows, to whom he devoted the afternoon hours.

When Mass was said in the chapel, and during the final ten years there was a permanent chaplain, before the congregation dispersed Nicholas opened his window and spoke a few words of friendly greeting. It is good to know that among these visitors were Nicholas' wife and children who thus, as it were, received back on a higher and supernatural plane the husband and father they had lost in the lower order of nature.

Nicholas was ready with shrewd advice, moral and religious common sense, and was assisted in giving it by the telepathic knowledge so frequent in the lives of the saints. Before they had opportunity to speak, he told a farmer that he did wrong to suspect a woman of bewitching his cattle, a jealous wife that her husband was not engaged, as she believed, in an intrigue with a neighbour. But a German Abbot who scornfully asked for a definition of avarice received his deserts. "Why do you ask me about avarice, a simple man with no possessions? No one knows what avarice is better than yourself. The year before last you bought twenty-seven tuns of wine for a song, and sold them last year at an enormous profit. But, after all, you have not gained anything out of the deal. Nor will you. For the Bishop has seized the entire stock and is keeping it in his cellar." This happened far away at Wurzburg.

For pilgrims came not only from all parts of Switzerland but from abroad. A Saxon knight, Waldheim, and the Dean Albrecht von Bonstetten have left detailed accounts of a visit to Nicholas. Though they disagree somewhat as to the warmth or coldness of his body, they paint the same picture of a cheerful—he had always been cheerful—affable and friendly man. His hair, we are told, was turning grey, and his beard, but his teeth were well-preserved. He had never had much occasion to use them. As we

should have expected, he was thin. His chapel was well-furnished with objects of devotion, the only presents he would accept. In its outer form Nicholas' prayer consisted of the ordinary devotions of a contemporary illiterate layman. Inwardly it was contemplative and mystical, finding expression in his symbolic visions. A symbolic diagram of the Trinity he used, and perhaps seen in a vision, was reproduced by a pilgrim.

Nicholas thus acquired the political respect and influence he would need for his great achievement. Cantons, Lucerne certainly, sent deputations to ask his advice, and Duke Sigismund of the Tirol became his friend. Distrust of the power and extensive possessions of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, is sufficient to account for the attitude of friendly neutrality adopted by Sigismund towards his hereditary enemies the Swiss, while they inflicted on Charles a series of defeats and finally slew him on the battlefield of Nancy. Nicholas' influence, however, encouraged him no doubt in his attitude. This indeed is suggested by the fact that the victorious Swiss presented his chapel with relics taken from the Duke.

The Swiss victory resulted in the most serious threat to the existence of the confederacy it has ever faced. For some time past relations had been strained between the urban and the rural cantons. Lucerne and Zürich had even contracted alliances outside the framework of the confederation. They now demanded the lion's share in the rich booty captured from the Burgundians, and that their allies in the war, Freiburg and Soleure, be admitted into the confederacy. On 18 December 1481 a conference of the cantons met at Stans to discuss the issues dividing them. As in the case of too many recent international conferences, no agreement could be reached. The rural cantons, Schweiz, Uri and Unterwalden, refused to accept Freiburg and Soleure. Their admission, they were convinced, would increase the already preponderant power of the urban cantons and be detrimental to their liberties. After some three days of heated debate a peaceful solution seemed impossible. The cantonal deputies were preparing to leave the following morning. It meant civil war, and a civil war which almost certainly would have broken up the confederacy. The very existence of Switzerland hung in the balance. In this extremity the parish priest of Stans, Heini Amgrund, determined to appeal to Nicholas. He spent the night

with him at his hermitage. Nicholas dictated to his old friend detailed terms for a settlement, and he hurried back with them to Stans to find the deputies on the verge of departure. He entreated them to meet once again and listen to the proposals he brought from Nicholas. Reverence for Nicholas' holiness combined with respect for his tried practical wisdom prevailed upon them to give his message a hearing. His plan was statesmanlike. Freiburg and Soleure would be admitted into the confederation. But alliances made outside the federal framework would be denounced and the new cantons would have no voice in matters affecting the local affairs of the original cantons. The proposed terms commended themselves to all the deputies, were accepted and embodied in a formal agreement, the Agreement of Stans.

Civil war had been avoided; the confederation strengthened by the abandonment of extra-federal treaties. So strong indeed was the federal bond now reforged, that it survived even the religious division of the following century. Switzerland had been definitely saved, with all it has meant for human liberty and peace, to be a concrete proof that racial, linguistic and religious differences need not prevent national union.

Thus was accomplished the unique mission towards which everything in Nicholas' life had converged, the repute of practical wisdom proved as father of a family, farmer, soldier, administrator and judge, the repute of holiness earned by his heroic life as a hermit and visibly sealed by his miraculous fast.

The bells rang out for joy. Freiburg and Soleure sent deputations to thank Nicholas. If his advice is not always taken in future—passions and interests are too strong—he is the elder statesman whose advice is sought, respected, and, if the obstacle is not too powerful, taken. The Duke of Milan asked him to mediate in a dispute with the Swiss over customs at the frontier; Constance, over a claim to exercise judicial rights in Thurgau. Nicholas' mediation in the customs dispute brought him a letter of thanks from the Council of Berne with a gift of forty pounds towards the endowment of the chaplaincy attached to his hermitage. In his letter of thanks he insists on the supreme importance of holding fast to the Catholic faith. Why he does so he does not know himself. For, as he says, their orthodoxy is unquestioned. But it would not be very long before Berne became a Protestant canton.

These activities, however, are but the aftermath of Nicholas' triumph at Stans when he saved his country, a service recognized by his statue in the building which houses the federal assembly.

In the early spring of 1487 his last and probably his first illness took hold of Nicholas. It did not last long but was extremely painful. Nor did his body alone suffer, agonizing torments in bones and sinews. His soul also suffered from fear and darkness. He shared thus in Gethsemani and Golgotha. His bodily condition was such that he could not lie down and rest but must always be moving. He was able, however, to speak to visitors and receive the last Sacraments. Many years before in a vision he had been promised discharge from his earthly warfare when he reached the age of seventy. And it was on his seventieth birthday, 21 March, that he died in the presence of his wife and children. I am glad they were with him at the last.

He was buried in the cemetery of his parish church, Sachseln. From the time of his death his grave was a place of pilgrimage and the people venerated him as a saint. His widow, praying at his grave, was cheered by a man who told her he had seen her husband in glory. In view of a canonization, evidence of his holy life was collected from relatives and friends and duly placed on record. Lives were written. Even Protestants after the Reformation revered the saviour of their country. Miracles were worked at his tomb and through his intercession. The grave was soon covered in, and the chapel thus formed united with the church. A succession of reinterments followed into tombs successively more imposing, until the body was finally elevated upon a special altar in the centre of the building. Among the pilgrims to Sachseln was St. Charles Borromeo. In 1586 St. Peter Canisius published *Ninety-two Considerations and Prayers of the devout Brother Claus of Unterwalden, together with his Precepts, Maxims and Prophecies now printed for the first time*. It was prefaced by a Life. But there was no influential Order to push the cause of a layman, no Catholic ruler, and the process was held up by technical breaches of canon law. It was not, therefore, until the reign of Pope Clement IX (1667-9) that the cultus of Nicholas was sanctioned by the Holy See. This equivalent beatification was not followed by canonization until our own time when, in 1947, the present Pope solemnly canonized Nicholas. Though we may regret the long delay, almost half a millennium, there is

a certain timeliness in the final event, that Nicholas should be canonized when the neutrality of Switzerland during the world wars has revealed in its fullness the value and fruitfulness of his work. Then only did the Church set her final seal upon it and upon the sanctity which had made it possible.

THERESA NEUMANN¹

MUCH AS WE DISLIKE THE PUBLICITY given nowadays to living persons in whom the spiritual life is interwoven with abnormal physical phenomena, still, when publicity has thus widely been given, a critical and scientific examination of the alleged events must be made. Miss H. Graef's *Case of Thérèse Neumann*² has so far been the only English book which made such an approach—a courageous undertaking in view of prevalent popular sentiment. It naturally provoked much recrimination; a few points had to be corrected; but its substantial thesis was seriously dealt with only in Continental periodicals, though it was there, too, that the most violent partisanship was exhibited. Fr. Siwek, following a different line of approach, will undoubtedly incur hardly milder reproaches than Miss Graef did, unless time and five years' deeper study have modified the earlier enthusiasm. His credentials are exceptional. He holds degrees from the Gregorian and Cracow Universities and the Sorbonne, is research professor at Fordham University and has made a special study of abnormal psychology, so to describe it, under Pierre Janet. This book is by no means a mere translation of his work, *Une Stigmatisée de nos jours*; and Archbishop Carinici, Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, says in his Introduction that he has read the book with attention, admires the impartial and objective presentation of the facts, and recalls that the Holy Father has determined to "intensify the scientific investigation (of such cases)" by creating a new medical council which will present its "collective opinion drawn up by eight or nine experts"; and after giving reasons for regarding this book as a "model of its kind" and of "great utility to all physicians whether Catholic or non-Catholic," he concludes: "Through this work, then, your reverence has earned the gratitude of science, of the Church, and especially of the Sacred Congregation of Rites."

Fr. Siwek starts from the principle that in such an enquiry one must of course first make sure that the alleged facts are facts, and then, ask

¹ *The Riddle of Konnersreuth*, by Paul Siwek, S.J. Translated by Fr. I. McCormick, O.F.M.Cap. (Browne and Nolan 16s).

² Mercier Press, 1950.

whether they *can* be accounted for naturally, or *must* be assigned to preternatural causes. Theresa Neumann is credited with ecstasies and visions, clairvoyance, the gift of tongues and prophecy, total abstinence from food, and the stigmata. Fr. Siwek finds the evidence for the use of foreign languages quite unconvincing; and that for the abstinence inadequate, since control is now impossible—her father and brother (whose fine obstinate features are seen in photographs) refuse, in defiance, we gather, of hierarchic requests if not orders, to allow her to be tormented any more by those examinations which alone allow of a due formation of opinion. As for clairvoyance, Fr. Siwek appeals perhaps too much to telepathy, the nature and even existence of which are still problematical. And he thinks that all the remaining phenomena may have a foundation in hysteria. To avoid misunderstanding, we must say that by "hysteria" we mean extreme suggestibility, and also that it is recognized that abnormal phenomena are no proof of sanctity, though they may (but need not) accompany it: we might almost say that many of them may be a symptom of imperfect sanctity. It is granted that ecstasy, for example, involves a certain interior "dislocation." St. John of the Cross struggled against it: theologians say that Our Lord and His Mother never experienced ecstasy. Hence we are not surprised that towards the end of the great mystics' life abnormal occurrences become rarer or disappear. Similarly, we are not surprised if at first "hysteria" should be interwoven with a truly spiritual life; in fact, sanctity may actually be achieved by a sufferer's *overcoming* his suggestibility and the mental upheavals due to the earlier invasions of special graces.

Hence we are all the readier to expect an admixture of hysteria in Theresa's experiences, since her illnesses, carrying every note of that suggestibility, began with the violent physical and mental shock of her grave accident in 1918. Already there is confusion in the evidence as here provided—in 1919 after one of her convulsions she found she was totally blind, yet she "anxiously observed their (the doctors') gestures and facial expressions." Of this she was suddenly cured in 1923, but the following abnormalities can all, I think, be paralleled in persons for whom no claim to sanctity is made,¹ and some, at least, are found among non-Catholics.

There are, however, elements suggesting that some of her experiences have *only* a human origin. I do not dwell upon her periodical "infantilism," when she does not remember the meaning of simple words, like "mother," or "Pope," or numerals, but has, for example, to say "one and one and one," etc., to arrive at "six"; or her description in ecstasy of what is mere legend, like the stories of

¹ See Thurston, *Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*, *passim*.

St. Barbara, St. Catherine, St. Mary Magdalen; but it is more serious when she contradicts the Scriptures and says, for example, that the Apostles were not asleep in Gethsemani or that the kiss of Judas was a sign of love. Finally, we cannot but think that the spiritual direction she received from the parish priest, Fr. Naber (a man of unblemished character but with no special training) has been hopelessly at fault. He at once gave her publicity and even preached in church about what she said in ecstasy:¹ sometimes it is he who takes charge of her even when in ecstasy. When Fr. Siwek visited her Fr. Naber "stood by the door reading letters, now and then glancing at Theresa and informing me of the exact moment of the Passion at which I was assisting": he explains her visions to Theresa herself, telling her that the young martyr she had seen was St. Laurence, that she had seen Our Lady. On the other hand, he will ask her to solve difficult (even financial) problems, and for information as to the fate of deceased persons, and she on her side may tell him how to direct her, how to act in the future; and since she is unaware of what she says in ecstasy and may, afterwards, ask for what conflicts with her ecstatic commands, he feels he must disregard the former requests because he cannot "act contrary to the will of Jesus Christ." No wonder that Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland, who began by being an enthusiastic believer, afterwards entirely revised his views, refused to go to Konnersreuth, and said that Fr. Naber should at once be transferred elsewhere and Theresa put in a convent. Such revisions of opinion have not been rare.

Since then in the Lives of canonized saints we read of extreme eccentricities and portents, which are paralleled elsewhere, we surmise that there is an overlapping element to be found, having nothing *as such* to do with sanctity: it is still very far from certain how far the mind can affect the body; and as for holiness, it must be judged by quite different principles, obedience and self-effacement being qualities we immediately seek and in this case do not yet find.

C. C. MARTINDALE

¹ We regret some of the photos even in this book (and also the dust-jacket): they seem to me very "arranged," and the stigmata in the frontispiece are like square patches of sticking-plaster.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

FAURÉ'S "REQUIEM" was written in 1888, and it is only comparatively recently that it has established itself in this country as a masterpiece of religious music. Reasons for this are not difficult to find, for in an age of gargantuan scores and opulence of colour (Strauss, Mahler, and Bruckner were names in the ascendant), Fauré dared to write a religious work that relied, not on outward theatrical gestures, but on a withdrawn intensity expressed in fairly simple terms and with small resources. The profound thought and feeling that finds concentrated expression in this simple yet subtle music has only gradually been objectified in performance, and much adverse criticism of the work has, I feel, been occasioned by an over-sweet approach that saps the inner strength of the music. Here, at last, on a Decca record, is a virile and wonderfully focused performance that, without sacrificing any of the beauty, brings to light the impassioned drama. The performance by the Roger Wagner Chorale, an American ensemble, is extraordinary for its insight and technical achievement, and I have no hesitation in giving it pride of place in new issues.

Other Fauré music, the late "Chansons d'Ève," Op. 95, and the Second Violin and Piano Sonata, Op. 108, also appear on Decca records. The former are sung, somewhat bloodlessly, by Irma Kolassi, but the songs are not the best of Fauré's output in this genre, the lyricism being too attenuated. The Sonata, on the other hand, is a fine work and played with fine understanding by Christian Ferras and Pierre Barbizet. But better still, for me, is the work on the reverse side, Debussy's late Violin and Piano Sonata. This is a consummately shaped work; clear, precise, economical, with means and ends perfectly fused, and certainly containing no hint of the alleged "decadence" of Debussy's last period. While I am on the subject of French music, I would like to mention another superb Decca record: French Renaissance Vocal Music, conducted by Nadia Boulanger. The extended virtuoso "bird-piece" by Jannequin is alone worth the money, but all are miniature treasures and sung with complete understanding. Only in one, Claude le Jeune's "Revey venir du printans," is there a feeling of vocal strain in the soprano line. The excerpts from various Rameau operas (Brunswick AXTL1053) and longer extracts from his "Hippolyte et Aricie" (OL50034) whet one's appetite for more recordings of a composer whose uninhibited style throws up many felicities. In particular, I would like a recording of the complete harpsichord works of Rameau. L'Oiseau Lyre (obtainable through Decca) have issued the Suites in D and G for violas and harpsichord by Marin Marais, 1656-1728 (OL50048), but I have been

disappointed with the content of the music, perhaps because I expected something more personal.

An enterprise long overdue has now been completed by Decca: i.e., the recording of Vaughan Williams's symphonies. The Sea Symphony (two long-playing records), No. 4 in F minor, No. 5 in D, and No. 6 in E—all authoritatively performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, under Sir Adrian Boult—complete the series begun some time ago by a 78-recording of the London Symphony and the more recent L. P. recording of the Pastoral Symphony reviewed in these columns. Also issued are the *Sinfonia Antarctica*—a work extraordinary in sound but yet, for me, not belonging, as some critics maintain, to the corpus of symphonies—and "Job." Like all great art, this music both disturbs and consoles for it touches the whole circumference of living. Less impelling as a whole, but belonging to the same category of thought, is Holst's "The Planets," vitally performed by the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Malcolm Sargent. It is an uneven work, tending at times to become merely picturesque, but "Mars," "Saturn," "Uranus" and "Neptune" all contain wonderful and fundamental things. English music is further represented by two of Elgar's finest works, the "Enigma Variations," and "Falstaff" (London Symphony Orchestra under, respectively, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Anthony Collins). The latter work, not so well known as the Variations, demands more concentrated listening, as it is long and intricately organized, but everything is of compelling interest, whether concerned with the more subtle delineation of character or with external events. These are two fine records. Britten is represented by the slight yet always apt folk-song arrangements (LW5122) and the larger "Les Illuminations" and "Serenade" (LXT2941) conducted by Eugene Goossens. Peter Pears is the singer on both records, and as he has made this music so completely his own it comes over with vivid impact. Stravinsky, too, is well served in new recordings. The "Duo Concertante" played by Joseph Fuchs and Leo Smit is a superb little work with a final "Eclogue" that has exquisite poise and almost Greek clarity. It makes the Copland violin and piano sonata on the reverse side seem very "small fry." Ansermet, that indefatigable supporter of Stravinsky, conducts the "Symphony of Psalms" and "Firebird" (LXT2916), and there is a particularly fine American performance under Steinberg, of the "Rite of Spring" (CTL7061). Being no longer sensational, one's inner ear, in listening to this music, is now more deeply engaged, and although it still remains a most remarkable score, one is aware of much triteness and a certain irritating short-windedness of ideas.

Kathleen Ferrier was a singer with a superb voice (perhaps one of the loveliest voices of all time) but what is still rarer, she had a sense

of style, and a musicianship that permeated the smallest detail of phrasing, intonation, and diction. All these qualities are abundantly evident in four new LP records: Bach arias from the St. Matthew and St. John Passions and the B minor Mass, Brahms' "Four Serious Songs," Mahler's "Three Rückert Songs" (Bruno Walter and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra) and a Schubert and Schumann Recital. These are records to treasure.

Fine pianists are abundant in new records. Wilhelm Kempff is equally authoritative in a Brahms Recital and in two Mozart Concertos (No. 9 in E flat major and No. 15 in B flat), but it is a pity that the orchestral string tone is so "edgy" in the Mozart recordings. Two other Mozart concertos (No. 23 in A major and No. 24 in C minor) are played by Clifford Curzon with a pearly beauty of tone. The same approach is evident in Reginald Kell's performance of the Quintet in A for clarinet and strings, and in the Quartet in F for oboe and strings by continental players unknown to me. On the reverse of this record are two ravishing works by Telemann for oboe and harpsichord, a Sonata and a Partita. Six Concertos for flute and orchestra, Op. 10, by Vivaldi, finely played by Jean-Pierre Rampal are not among the composer's profoundest music but are nevertheless well worth knowing. Going back still further in time we arrive at Monteverdi, eleven of whose madrigals, conducted by Nadia Boulanger, appear on an L.P. record (AXTL1051). The purist will find things to cavil at here, but what a ravishing sound! This is a record to live with. Not so Strauss's "Salome" (complete on two records: Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Krauss) or the Paganini recital by Ruggiero Ricci: although I prefer the breath-taking virtuosity of the latter to the deadening sensuousness of the former.

Exotic music of extraordinary interest is contained in eight Decca records of African music collected and introduced by Hugh Tracey. The rhythmic virtuosity and sense of instrumental colour are new in one's listening experience. Not so compelling is the record of "Music of Mexico": it is far more sophisticated.

All the records mentioned are either Decca or obtainable through Decca.

EDMUND RUBBRA

REVIEWS

POLISH ADVENTURER

The Count, by Geoffrey Rawson (Heinemann 21s).

THIS IS A LONG-NEEDED BOOK in Victorian biography, but the title would apply as well to D'Orsay or several foreign adventurers who have figured in English social history. Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki (the only Pole to enter the Brummagem Valhalla of the *D. N. B.*) was not only naturalized (save for the impossible spelling of his name) but became a Knight Commander of the SS. Michael and George, a Fellow of the Royal Society, a D.C.L. of Oxford and a legendary pioneer in Australia.

He named Mount Kosciusko in the Australian Alps; he made a courageous journey of discovery. He realized that Australia held gold, and kept the dangerous secret at the request of the Governor. He proved himself the ablest administrator during the Irish famine of the 'forties. Physically and mentally he was well endowed. Is his name not written in the annals of the Royal Geographical, and are his bones not in Kensal Green under a stone recently guaranteed and adorned by the Australian Government? His charm and virility appealed to the ladies of his era, but he had the character to admire and assist such as Florence Nightingale, Lady Franklin and Lady Herbert of Lea. His name often appears in Victorian memoirs and indexes. This is the first consecutive account.

It is a chance that any material has survived for a biography, for he requested his executor to destroy his papers. A remarkable autograph book survived from his possessions, but whither did it pass? There was trouble and mystery over his Will, which was contested by his Polish relatives. Letters survived written to the lady for whose love he had been constrained to leave Poland. His physical strength and charm, exerted alike on ladies of fashion or men of science, enabled him to become a traveller in the wilds as well as amid the salons of society. Penniless, he supported himself by collecting geological specimens and trading them to museums. Without a degree or training he fitted himself in the University of the World. Men like the arctic explorer Franklin, Gladstone, Palmerston recognized that he was a man and even amongst strong men a lion in his way. His biographer finds resemblances between him and Cecil Rhodes, Nansen, and his fellow Pole, Conrad. Like Rhodes, he visioned the Empire of the Anglo-Saxon—not from the plains of South Africa, but from the Blue Mountains in New South Wales. Like Nansen, he made his way where no man had trodden before and became a philanthropist. Like Conrad,

he became efficient in English speech and at home in British ships. But his depths and his real life call for more documents than can be found. He was possibly a greater man than suspected then or can be known.

His loss of religion is sad to Catholic readers. Though Cardinal Manning and Lady Herbert of Lea were in close touch with him and hoped for his return to the Faith, he left words in his Will which seem to have destroyed that possibility. He declared for the neant—the nihilism of hope—and forbade any symbol, Christian or pagan, to be erected on his grave. He survives in that great and generous cemetery, the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

As he had reached Australia through South America, he chose to return to Europe by China. In England he gambled his last hardly-won sovereigns on producing the first account of the physical conditions of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. His ideas were magnificent, for he proposed to add a map of twenty-five feet in length to his book. It brought him all the scientific fame and recognition he could desire.

As he had seen and sympathized with the last native Tasmanians, so he came near to visiting the last Celts of Connaught. The great famine in Ireland had broken out, and he was appointed Commissioner for Relief in Mayo and Sligo. From 1847 to 1849 he administered those stricken counties and ended as the Executive Officer in Dublin with forty military officers assisting under his supervision. Some twenty millions (in francs) he stated were entrusted to him, for he wrote steadily during all the years of travel and adventure to Adyna Turno, the sweetheart for whom he had been compelled to leave Poland—after attempting an elopement. They met after forty years, but it was too late and both remained unmarried.

He entered as a benefactor into Irish history, and this work must be accounted to his soul's salvation. Canon O'Rourke in his history of the famine wrote: "In this work the leading figure was the generous and never-to-be-forgotten Count Strzelecki."

Leave him there in peace. This was a man who was sorely tried and who came through like the enduring Odysseus, but who found no Homer to chant his journeys and character.

SHANE LESLIE

A GREAT HUMAN TRAGEDY

Tragödie Schlesiens: 1945-6. In Dokumenten, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Erzbistums Breslau. Bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Dr. Johannes Kaps (Verlag "Christ Unterwegs," Munich, n.p.).

The Martyrdom of Silesian Priests: 1945-6 (Kirchliche Hilfsstelle, Munich, n.p.).

Silesia in Pictures: A Record of Remembrance. Compiled by Alfons Teuber (Verlag "Christ Unterwegs," Munich, n.p.).

ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES of the past grim twenty years is that of the *displaced persons*: in itself a colourless term for official usage which hides the profound compassion it should evoke and the condemnation that it should demand. The epithet "displaced" almost conceals the fact that the people in question are human persons, entitled to respect and charity from their fellow human beings. Instead, they have been driven and chased across the face of the Continent with far less consideration than cattle or commercial commodities. They were less in fact than commodities; they were *in-commodities*, not wanted, something to be rid of—at any cost and in any manner. It is a sad and shameful story, whether we think of Jews reeling before the racial laws and persecution of Nazis or Eastern Europeans escaping from the Soviet terror or, finally, of whole German populations harried westwards from the Oder-Neisse line between post-war Germany and Poland.

In the first and largest of these three books Dr. Kaps has gathered together in much detail the story of the displaced people of Silesia. The book is prefaced with the protest of the Catholic hierarchy of Western Germany, registered in January, 1946, against the expulsion of ten million Germans from Silesia, East and West Prussia, Pommern and the Sudeten lands. They had been driven out from hearth and homeland, unable to take their possessions with them, and without any guarantee, and in some cases scant hope, that Western Germany could receive and accommodate them. The bishops allowed that crimes had been perpetrated by Germans against neighbouring peoples but protested that revenge for this should not be visited upon the innocent.

Dr. Kaps is concerned here only with the German population of Silesia, and his information, sedulously sorted and analysed, has been provided by the clergy and people of the diocese of Breslau. Silesia was a meeting ground of East and West but it became increasingly Westernized during two centuries of independent sovereignty and then under Bohemia, Austria and finally Prussia. In Lower Silesia the population was almost wholly German, with a Polish minority in

Upper Silesia. Census figures for 1939 gave slightly over three million inhabitants in the lower province to the east of the Oder-Neisse frontier and a million and a half in the upper province. Of these four and a half million people, two and a quarter million were by 1948 in Western Germany, and a million and a quarter more in the Soviet zone of occupation. Behind these bare figures is a long story of distress and destitution, of cruelty and stupidity, of man's inhumanity to man. A census taken in 1950 showed that there were then in the West German Republic four and a half million persons, and in the Russian zone nearly another four and a half million people, who prior to 1939 had their homes east of the new frontiers.

Dr. Kaps adduces a further figure which is truly alarming, though neither he nor ourselves can be absolutely certain of its value. He states that, war casualties apart, two and a half million German civilians lost their lives as a consequence of war and displacement. Of these, one and a half million came from these territories in question, annexed in 1945 by the Russians and Poles. As Silesians formed practically half the total of these Eastern Germans, he argues that their casualty total must have reached three-quarters of a million.

It is remarkable how the West German Republic has succeeded in absorbing within its cramped territory close on five million of these refugees. But it has left Western Germany overcrowded and overpopulated and with a strong claim for more territory to the East which in the long run will have to be considered and satisfied.

Dr. Kaps' work consists, for two-thirds of its length, of eye-witness and other accounts of the last months of the war in Silesia and of the displacements. It is not exactly a work for current reading, but it is an admirable essay in documentation.

The second and third books are slighter. The former gives details from the lives and work of Silesian priests, shot by the Russians or who died sharing the hardships of their displaced parishioners. The latter is nostalgic: a collection of choice pictures, recalling villages and churches and the countryside of a lost but not forgotten homeland.

JOHN MURRAY

MURDER IN THE THEATRE

The Dark is Light Enough, A Winter Comedy, by Christopher Fry
(Oxford University Press 8s 6d).

OUR MUCH ADVERTISED REVIVAL of poetic drama has really been a tribute to Mr. T. S. Eliot's will power, backed up by the wishful-thinking of a considerable section of the populace. A new poetic drama was certainly wished for, and Mr. Eliot certainly willed

it. Modern non-dramatic poetry had sent the Common Reader flying, and it seemed all the more desirable that poetic drama should recapture him in the shape of the Common Theatregoer. Mr. Eliot was the natural leader: he had written inspiringly about the Elizabethans and Jacobeans; he had studied the social and cultural phenomena associated with the Golden Age of Drama; he had thought deeply about the problems involved (*A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry* was printed in 1928, *Poetry and Drama* in 1951); he took advice, sometimes from people not necessarily qualified to advise him; and, most important, in *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock* and *Portrait of a Lady* he had evinced a remarkable talent for the dramatic. Could he and his followers thus achieve a reunification of the national sensibility?

Yes, it would have been a great thing. But it never came true. Shakespeare's plays are greater poetry than his sonnets—Eliot's plays, at their best moments, come nowhere near his non-dramatic verse. As for his followers, they do not stand up very well to Beaumont and Fletcher.

For the sad truth is that, very early in our new poetic drama, poetry became a casualty. Eliot attempted to gloss over the seriousness of this accident by claiming that "the self-education of a poet trying to write for the theatre seems to require a long period of disciplining his poetry, and putting it, so to speak, on a very thin diet in order to adapt it to the needs of the stage . . ." (*Poetry and Drama*). From this point in time, a quick look at the results suggests that this ingenious dieting was more a self-perversion than a self-education. "All for the Stage, or Poetry Well Lost" is a perverse slogan. Our national existence doesn't depend on our having a Poetic Drama—nor does our artistic existence. Indeed, the latter might even depend on our not straining ourselves to have one when we can't and on not pretending to have one when we haven't. Our New Elizabethans are only too ready to believe that they can repeat the past in art without repeating it in life.

In *Poetry and Drama* Eliot says very truly that "no play should be written in verse for which prose is *dramatically* adequate." What is *The Confidential Clerk* written in, then? Prose, one supposes, is adequate to it dramatically—it appears quite adequate to it intellectually and emotionally. And in fact the play does seem to have been written in prose. (Though one reviewer, I note, coined the expression "poetry prose" to describe the style—for the somewhat paradoxical reason that "the two stresses, conversational and metrical, largely cancel out.") So Eliot has not offended his own critical theory. But, it seems to me, nor has he done anything more positive. *The Waste Land*, whatever one may feel about it otherwise, remains Eliot's most dramatic work, and the most dramatic work of our century.

Mr. Fry achieved celebrity on the grounds that he had really and truly brought poetry back into poetic drama. "Sparkle," "exuberance," "wit" and "colour"—those were the words. But where Eliot was curiously flat, Fry was on the gassy side. It should have been more firmly recognized than it was that Fry's poetry—though there was more of it—was inferior in quality: there were plenty of pearls five or more words long, but they were mainly paste.

The new play, *The Dark is Light Enough*, is essentially a piece of Chocolate Soldierly with a mildly sad ending. The heroine is a rather affected and irritating creature (though less so than the Duke in *Venus Observed*), and the epigrams are still too-too clever in a slightly namby-pamby way—

Richard, let me have your arm to lean on.
My body sometimes tells me
I'm not here for ever.

(The epigrams, or aphorisms, in *The Confidential Clerk* tend to be dull but honest.) All the same, Fry's development has run parallel to the course of poetic drama in general: he has chastened his style, he too has been cutting down on his poetry's diet. There is much less of that arty-heartiness about *The Dark is Light Enough* and the preceding play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, than there was in the earlier ones. At this rate their author may well end as a competent prose dramatist.

Both Eliot's play and Fry's belong to the premature old age of our "revival." Both are rather sophisticated and yet "easy to understand," both are rather prosy, neither is exactly powerful. Fry skips over his profundities with a reassuring smile, while Eliot explores his trivialities with a heavy hand (in Act Three, Lucasta takes eleven longish lines to say "I can only be a sister to you"). Yet *The Confidential Clerk* is comparatively genial, and free from that certain offensiveness that clings about *The Cocktail Party*; while *The Dark is Light Enough* has restraint, and restraint is said to be a virtue. It is questionable whether the former would have reached the stage at all, had it come from a less celebrated hand: Fry's play would certainly have got that far on its merits. But a third product of this year—*Under Milk Wood*, more modestly describing itself as "A Play for Voices"—is, for all its forced "earthiness," better entertainment than either, and certainly not worse art.

D. J. ENRIGHT

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY THINKERS

European Thought in the Eighteenth Century, by Paul Hazard (Hollis and Carter 35s).

M. HAZARD is an exceedingly learned man, but he carries his learning, as the saying is, lightly. In fact he carries it a bit too lightly. As he conducts us through his long gallery of eighteenth-century highbrows, remarking the vanities, obsessions, illusions and foibles of each, he is constantly chuckling and occasionally—the word, I fear, is not too strong—giggling. This way of handling the matter is well enough for the occasional interlude. Indeed, the intellectuals of the eighteenth century were such an abnormally humourless lot that a certain occasional frolicsomeness is for their historian a compensation which he owes to his own sanity. They took themselves too seriously to be taken quite seriously by posterity. But the ironical and facetious approach, when kept up for page after page and chapter after chapter, becomes tiresome and frustrating to the reader. He begins to feel as if he were eating a long meal consisting entirely of soufflé. He longs for the author to be serious, to stop displaying his rich store of entertaining but often rather trivial information and to drive the probe of criticism and analysis down into the heart of the subject; he wants some hard tack, and, in the main, he does not get it.

This defect in M. Hazard's book is really rather odd. Works on the thought of centuries are apt to be woolly, to suffer from such an excess of windy generalizations that one screams for some facts. Here it is the other way round: the facts are like pebbles on the shore; it is classification and judgment that one misses. Such an accumulation of information cannot, of course, fail to convey an impression of the peculiarities of the eighteenth-century mind, but the final picture lacks definition; woolliness is the result, though of a cause the opposite of the usual one.

The mass of information we are given about the characters, opinions, foibles and adventures of the Enlightened is impressive, not to say stunning. All the great names are there—Locke, Leibnitz, Montesquieu, the Encyclopaedists, Voltaire, Lessing and the rest—together with scores of others no ordinary English reader has ever heard of; and yet one reader at least worked through the book with a mounting sense of frustration and disappointment. It was so like reading a slightly facetious Biographical Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century Thinkers which had accidentally been printed in the form of a continuous and coherent thesis, and he began to feel the need of a stiff dose of Acton.

This is the book's main defect. Another fault lies in Mr. J. Lewis May's translation. Idiomatically the translation is excellent, but in rendering French idiomatic felicity is not always enough. There is

common in French a certain vivacious and rhetorical way of writing which simply cannot be transposed as it stands into English without a deplorable effect of archness. The rhetorical question is a case in point: it can only be used very sparingly in English prose, and the translator has done the author a poor service by retaining it whenever he found it in the French. Still worse is the trick of retrospective apposition ("They liked to put a touch of the picturesque into their life-stories, these gentlemen"); like the other it is a device of which English is less patient than French. There are passages of brisk sprightliness. Part II, Chapter V, "Government," begins:

Whence did Machiavelli get the idea that we were compounded of such sorry stuff? Out on this Machiavelli fellow! To the flames with that *Prince* of his! A pernicious book if ever there was one, inspired throughout with the false maxim that all government should be inspired by reasons of State. Every chapter oozes poison. If Europe did not throw overboard these Machiavellian notions, these ravings of a disordered mind, so much the worse for Europe. But this Florentine quill-driver, wretched fellow, was not the only one to go off the lines. . . .

It is hard to read this sort of thing without embarrassment.

Yet there are good things scattered about in this book. In so far as a unifying theme can be extracted, it is the nature and development of the century's attack on Christianity. If his treatment of the crucial act of the age, the suppression of the Jesuits, sheds no new light on that subject, the author places the grand assault where it should be. By the Suppression,

the dyke had been breached, and the flood-waters of impiety were rising. Had they, the philosophers who now took over the direction of men's minds, had they indeed ripped out Christianity from their hearts? . . . Did not the very fierceness of their attack betoken the presence within them of some stubborn force that still remained unconquered? Be that as it may, they believed that they had shaken off the yoke. What the historian of ideas must . . . put down to their account is the immense effort they made to transform into a non-Christian Europe the Christian Europe that confronted them. What he would next have to consider is the nature of the substitute they proposed to put in its place.

Thus ends Part I: "Christianity on Trial." Part II is entitled "The City of Men." The *philosophes* set out to construct a tidy, useful, un-mysterious world under a tame watchmaker Deity, yet before they had even laid their foundations the enterprise began to go awry: "It looked, in short, as if the *Aufklärung* had started the *Sturm und Drang*."

The sense of mystery would keep breaking through. The neat walls of the rationalists' world were not three courses up when they began to cave in beneath the flood of Sensibility and the whole rush of the Romantic Movement, and the aridities of the Encyclopaedists were inundated by a reflux of sentiment which was to bring society round, before long, to the enjoyment of Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*.

Yet, though the reaction was powerful, the recovery was only partial. The planners of the new secular civilization were quarrelling over the blueprint even before the Revolution, but the idea of a man-made world had nevertheless taken hold of the minds of millions, and a scale of values had come to be generally accepted which made the spiritual convulsions of the age of Pascal as incomprehensible to the contemporaries of J. S. Mill as their humanistic assumptions would have seemed impious and absurd to the contemporaries of Bossuet. Such was the great transition achieved by the intellectuals of the eighteenth century, the men about whom M. Hazard gives us such a wealth of curious information.

OLIVER J. G. WELCH

SATAN WORSHIP

The Satanic Mass. A Sociological and Criminological Study, by H. T. F. Rhodes (Rider 16s).

THIS BOOK covers so vast a field that it is impossible to describe it in detail. The chapters on the Gibourg Mass are said to be quite new; we may have been wrong in thinking we knew about it at least vaguely: "Satanism in the eighteenth century" too is said to be new, though we think that the performances of Sir Francis Dashwood and of Hell-Fire clubs in general are chiefly legendary and concerned much more with drunkenness and lechery, together with a boastful atheism, than with Satanism as such. The origin and slowly decaying essence of "Satan-worship" is the pre-Christian belief in duality at the root of things—the White God and the Black God. Unnecessary to trace the history of this belief, mainly through the Manichaeans, the Bogomils and so forth until the South European climax was reached in the Albigensians, only to reappear mixed with witchcraft and poisonings, most notoriously (though probably not more substantially) about the time of Louis XIV of France. We think that in proportion as the earliest philosophy died out (it hardly exists now, since here at any rate fewer and fewer know how to distinguish right from wrong, or care much about either, or believe firmly in one God, let alone two), a minority survived (and still does) who wished to do

evil for evil's sake; but a vastly larger number of persons exist beset by an inferiority complex (increasing when the Welfare State allows them fewer and fewer free choices), who regain some sense of power by defying the opposite of what had been taught, or imposed, as "good." And there is always the frivolous froth of those who like to be naughty and have not outgrown the schoolboy enjoyment of Secret Societies. The author will not mind if we indicate a few faults in the text or in his argument.

It is out of the question that the passage in *Ecclesiasticus* 24 refers to the "return of the goddess (Astaroth)," despite Canon W. Knox: nor was Astaroth (varieties of whose name are given) "of Greek origin": nearly all that is recounted of Mithra has to be conjectured from sculptured slabs—at least he was never called "Sol Invicta"; he was not a "personification" of Ormuzd, nor can he possibly be regarded as "the nearest approach to a unique god that the pagan theology ever achieved," and we are sorry that the idea that Becket's death was perhaps a "ritual killing inspired by the Mithraic equivalent of the doctrine of sacrifice and atonement" should so much as be repeated—we are glad that William Rufus was not mentioned! We think that the Quietism of Mme. Guyon is vastly overrated, and we have yet to find evidence for Versailles, during one of the king's "periodical attacks of religion," being "invaded by swarms of Jesuits"! In so erudite a work, Capuchins should not be called "monks"; and we can assure the author that J. K. Huysmans's conversion was sincere and even heroic; but we regret that his *Là Bas* seems always to be defrauded of its "accent grave"—in fact, on p. 172 the first French quotation is deprived of three acute accents and two *rs*, and the second of an *n*: pantagram should be pentagram; we doubt whether Pius IX made mistakes in his Latin; or that "in venerum promiscueruebant . . . illius Os" would have been written quite like that; *Offre* is presumably *Affre*; and we cannot understand the pedigree on that page, in which Gabriel Jogand (Taxil) seems to descend in a straight line from "Blesséd Jean-François Regis" [*sic*] through "Claude de la Colombe." Mr. Rhodes rightly concludes that man's future depends on his "rediscovery . . . that good and evil really exist." But while the Church has at times "modified its discipline," it has not "restated and redefined its dogma" by absorbing principles that originated with its enemies. There is now no Hegelian "thesis and antithesis"—Communism v. Capitalism: the Communist régimes are becoming as imperialist as any. That the need of "ethical," that is, spiritual foundations is better recognized by many, is true: we pray that the "many" may be "enough" to rescue the world; but it will be no mere "evolutionary leap" that brings us nearer to God's City.

C. C. MARTINDALE

GABRIEL MARCEL

De l'existence à l'être: La philosophie de Gabriel Marcel, by Roger Troisfontaines, S.J. (Nauwelaerts, Louvain, 2 vols., n.p.)

THIS IS CERTAINLY THE COMPLETEST, the most thorough, the most systematic and the most faithful exposition of Marcel's philosophy which has ever been published. It is the fruit not only of a prolonged and sympathetic study of Marcel's works but also of personal conversations with the latter, who put at the author's disposition some unpublished material and who, in the letter to the author which serves as a preface, sets his own seal, as it were, upon the work. After expressing his gratitude for the tenacity with which Fr. Troisfontaines devoted seven years to the composition of his book, Marcel declares not only that the author has written with great clarity and with perfect fidelity to his (Marcel's) thought but also that he has written the book "which I should like to have written" and done "what I ought to have done myself." The work "realizes on a much vaster scale what I wished myself to give in my Gifford lectures." No author of a book on the thought of an eminent philosopher could hope for a better testimonial from the philosopher in question.

The work is a systematic exposition of Marcel's philosophy rather than a tracing of the development of his thought according to a chronological scheme. But Marcel agreed to this procedure and defends it in his preface. The work is divided into two large volumes, each containing more than four hundred pages. In the first volume the introduction, on "The Man and his Work," is followed by two parts, entitled respectively "The Being-in-the-World and Concrete Philosophy" and "What am I?" In these two parts the author explains Marcel's treatment of such themes as technocracy, "objectified" man, philosophy and science, participation, existence, "incarnated" being, philosophical method, being and having, time and eternity, problem and mystery, testimony (or witness), grace and liberty, creative fidelity. The second volume is also divided into two parts, "Presence of the Neighbour" and "O God, I believe in Thee!" Here we find such themes as "I and Thou," love, the family, human brotherhood, death, hope, the approach to the mystery of God, prayer, Christian life. And at the end there is a complete bibliography of Marcel's writings up to 1 January 1953.

This monumental work is not meant to be, nor is it in fact, a popular statement of Marcel's "views." It is obviously designed for the serious student; and, even with so sympathetic an expositor as Fr. Troisfontaines, Marcel's thought retains its peculiar elusiveness. But the author, while not agreeing with all that Marcel says, helps us to avoid some serious misinterpretations to which the latter's way of writing

gives occasion, especially when certain statements are taken in isolation. Marcel never set out to provide a system of philosophy in the sense in which the philosophies of Spinoza and Hegel are systems. But there can be a systematic presentation of his concrete reflections; and this is what Fr. Troisfontaines has given us. He thus enables us to see Marcel's thought in its right perspective.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON

MUSICIANS AT COURT

Music at Court: four eighteenth-century studies, by Alan Yorke-Long.
Preface by Patrick Trevor-Roper. Introduction by Professor Edward Dent (Weidenfeld and Nicolson 18s).

THIS IS IN EVERY WAY a delightful book. So few writers on music combine wit, urbanity and enthusiasm, so few bother to study the social and political background that influenced the music that interests them, that on the rare occasions when a reviewer discovers one who does he is tempted to echo the famous pronouncement with which Schumann greeted the youthful Chopin; and it is particularly sad to record the death of such a writer in the prime of his life. Mr. Yorke-Long died before he could complete his book as he had planned it. A study of the court of Leopold I of Austria was too fragmentary to be included, and its place is filled by a history of music at the court of Parma from about 1620 to 1790, taken from the author's unfinished history of eighteenth-century court music. This essay suffers in comparison with the others from the lack of a central character to excite Mr. Yorke-Long to real enthusiasm.

I can only praise unreservedly the other studies in this volume: on the spendthrift, luxury-loving Charles Eugene of Württemberg; on Maria Antonia of Saxony, who counted musical composition among her many artistic accomplishments; and on Frederick the Great himself, who in many of his symphonies and sonatas and concertos for his beloved flute rivalled the finest composers of his day (more closely, I think, than Mr. Yorke-Long has allowed) and whose decline from enlightened, art-loving young prince to captious old despot is brilliantly illustrated here. At all the courts discussed in this book, except Frederick's, opera was the main musical fare; and the whims and excesses of their rulers and of the temperamental singers and dancers who served them are fair game for Mr. Yorke-Long's witty pen. Above all, his book encourages one to turn to the few accessible works by the half-forgotten composers he discusses—among them Graun, Benda, C. P. E. Bach, Reichardt, Hasse, Jommelli and Traetta—

all of whom wrote music that is well worth reviving. Dr. Trevor-Roper writes a moving memoir of the author; and the introduction, being by Professor Dent, is both witty and illuminating.

NIGEL FORTUNE

OTHER NOTICES

Alfred North Whitehead: An Anthology, selected by F. S. C. Northrop and Mason W. Gross (Cambridge University Press 75s).

THIS ANTHOLOGY is an attempt to present a selection from Whitehead's published writings which will provide an adequate conspectus of his philosophy. The compilers have rightly avoided anything in the nature of snippets. One short book—*Religion in the Making*—has been included in its entirety, and all Whitehead's other important philosophical works are represented by several complete chapters. Altogether some fifty chapters culled from ten books are reprinted. In addition, an early and highly specialized treatise on mathematical philosophy is reprinted in full, presumably because the original is now difficult of access. Apart from this, however, the volume does not include any of his work on pure mathematics or logic.

Anthologies are, in general, unsatisfactory sources for the study of philosophy, but an exception can perhaps be made for the present volume. Whitehead's only systematic exposition of his philosophy, in *Process and Reality*, is exceptionally difficult, and can hardly be understood without a previous acquaintance with his earlier works. A student who has neither the time nor the energy to read these works in their entirety would probably get a better view of his philosophy from this anthology than from a detailed study of a more limited number of his complete works. The editors have added some notes on Whitehead's terminology which will be helpful to the beginner.

My Friends the Senses, by Fr. C. D. Boulogne, O.P., translated by Jane Howes; Foreword by Fr. G. Vann, O.P. (Burns and Oates 15s).

WE HAVE HEARD THE CATHOLIC FAITH called "Christianity *au grand complet*": we may go even further and see in it the fulfilment of life and of the world itself, for Christianity has been too often represented even by Catholics as involving an *abdication* so far as possible of all created things, the body and its senses included. This book permits no such blasphemy and makes but a very short apologia

for its theme. It falls into two parts—"Grasping from Afar" (by sight, hearing and scent); and "Direct Contact" (by hand and taste). The author manages to be both a mystic and amusing. He accumulates colloquialisms and shows how half our normal talk is really made up of subtle metaphors. Perhaps the only sentence we fight shy of is in Fr. Vann's Foreword, where he quotes Miss Evelyn Underhill who says that by intensive contemplation of some object you are "merged with it, in an act of true communion." Complete communion is just what does not and cannot happen. *Omnis consummationis vidi finem*: "I have seen a limit put to all perfection." You may be thrilled to agony-point by the wonder of the simplest leaf, to say nothing of the glory of a flower or a butterfly; but you will always be wanting something else, and something more: *Ostende mihi faciem Tuam*: till God shows Himself present, the gulf is unbridged and fathomless.

No one can love and admire the flower as much as God does. After all, He invented it. Fr. Boulogne is very gentle with those unpredictable creatures, the artists. The artist is right in pursuing *quod visum placet*; but if it is only he who likes looking at his work, he may be wrong, for he too is a social animal and shouldn't quite isolate himself. And yet it does not follow that what very many people like must be truly likeable, such as religious prints which a growing minority find nauseating. Fr. Boulogne is no bigot; nor yet is he timid, nor unaware of the tremendous unbalancing pressure exercised on us by the senses. Still, "the Church has always preferred positive to negative solutions . . . (so) we speak so often of the pain of man that surely we can, for once, try to write a balance sheet of some of man's joys." The Curé d'Ars might have been appalled by the author's panegyric of dancing; but after all, David danced, and not only Salome—and Jeremias himself declares that virgins shall rejoice in dancing.

Sex, Sin and Sanctity, by J. Langdon-Davies (Gollancz 16s).

THIS BOOK COVERS MUCH GROUND, is not easy reading, and provides no clear-cut theory, or panacea for mankind's distresses. Indeed, the Introduction begins: "This exploration amid the ruins of fallen man must be, perforce, as fragmentary and ambiguous as its subject-matter." Ruins? Of what? Whence "fallen"? No matter: Man is now neurotic and sexually obsessed, but while the author rightly begins his study with History, and not with recent psychopathic theories, he does not propose to *explain* history simply by this study. He acknowledges a retreat from the idea that Christianity invented "chastity" and so spoilt human life: on the contrary, he thinks that the Church, though a "human institution," may have been more successful than anything else in regulating men's desires, and may yet

have a useful task to pursue, especially if the younger generation is swinging away from the looseness so noticeable after the first war, even though public opinion is unlikely to accept all the orthodox restrictions of the past. First, we recall that Plato's own theory (as expressed in the *Timaeus*) seemed ambiguous to his fellow-Greeks themselves. Further, not all "self-control" should be called "repression." It is not mere "repression" when an athlete, in training, freely abdicates, e.g., smoking: nor does the Christian merely repress himself when, in obedience to a noble ideal, he seeks to control his instincts. Indeed, he thus *develops* himself. As for St. Paul, does anyone now think that in *Romans* vii he is alluding to specifically sexual desires? The "flesh" meant simply the "unruly self" which kicks against any law, not only that of Moses. We are not sure whether the author means that the Church consciously introduced a doctrine of "forgiveness" to alleviate the sense of guilt when an intolerably hard law has been broken: that doctrine was not even originated by the Our Father which includes it. Mr. Langdon-Davies shows how consistently Christian doctrine as it developed kept clear of Manicheism; though naturally men who are straining after some difficult ideal tend to blacken what interferes with it or even falls short of it: hence the (almost amusing) adolescent violence of *De Contemptu Mundi*, from which (we are reminded) the maturer author could recover as he fathomed the doctrine of Redemption, a recovery impossible to other writers quoted. Again, procreation is the primary but not the only "end" of marriage. St. Paul, who uses marriage as the most perfect symbol of the union of Christ with His Church, reminds us that Christ *loves* His Church, and that husbands must similarly love their wives. The problem and even the cult of pain is often spoken of. But who feels what? It is hard to think that the Chinese and we experience pain in the same way, especially since our wish to avoid it at all costs has made it so much more noticeable. What scents did the Romans (or the Court of Versailles) react pleasurably to, recoil from, or fail to perceive? No contemporary of St. Simeon Stylites, we think, would have supposed that "few human beings could be more repulsive" than he! He wielded a vast influence from his tower: our modern selves would not have liked being up there with him; but him we love. One more detail—we think there was *no* special panic about the ending of the world in A.D. 1000. In fine, Mr. Langdon-Davies says much about the first two words of his alliterative title, but little about Sanctity, which *ex hypothesi* is supernatural. Yet he admits somewhere (no index!) that God "may have taken a hand" in a saint's levitations: but if He did, in a matter so relatively trivial, how much more must God be our starting-point when Sanctity is being discussed. A chapter deals very carefully with modern suggestions relative to the

use of marriage and so forth: Catholic authorities are not neglected, though perhaps not always understood.

To Next Year in Jerusalem, by David Marcus (Macmillan 12s 6d).

IT IS ALWAYS PLEASANT to read a book whose author obviously knows what he is talking about. Mr. Marcus certainly does. In fact, this being his first novel, he sometimes overloads his pages with details of setting and behaviour, or with descriptions of states of mind. The title is an ancient prayer which echoes many of the Psalms and has spiritualized them, while keeping so much of their vocabulary. The scene is a small Jewish settlement on the west coast of Ireland, such as we did not know existed. Mordecai Lippman, refugee from Russia, was of the uncompromising tradition, a warlike mystic, who (like his son) thought that the "worst Jew was better than the worst Gentile." His grandson Jonathan, while still a Jew in the very fibre of his mind, has identified himself with the "Catholic-Irish way of life," talks Gaelic, is in love with an Irish Catholic girl, and is deliberately proposed as chairman of the parish club by the young Fr. Lenehan who hopes that thus the two religions will come to understand one another better, while the Rev. Golding thinks that already the friendship between Jew and non-Jew "is proof to the whole world that religious bigotry, pagan fanaticism and racial hatred find no place in the hearts of the Irish nation." Unluckily, Jonathan does not feel this, and a later episode justifies him. The tragedy lies deep. If, as he feels, Anti-Semitism is a psychological disease, so too must be regarded the hatred felt not only by Mordecai (a magnificent character, though full of a true Hebraic belief in battle) but by Jonathan's less romantic parents, and even at times by himself. This obscures the positive element—the passionate longing for Palestine and Jerusalem in particular. Deeper still is the tragedy of what has happened in Palestine since the "return" began. We do not allude so much to the performances of politicians, who may too often be feeble or opportunists, or find that they *cannot* do what they wish, since they deal with men, not pawns, as to the influx of Jews who entertain none of the noble dreams of a Mordecai or even Jonathan and who are apostates even from their ancestral creed. Alas that Palestine cannot be an "exempted land" where Arab, Jew and Christian live in honourable peace, and where Jerusalem may be still further an "exempted" city, and that in it the Church of Holy Sepulchre may be totally rebuilt, no "denomination" claiming any exclusive right to do so! As it is, presumably it will fall down; and, once again, "Governments aren't interested."

Nothing Is Quite Enough, by Gary MacEoin (Hodder and Stoughton 12s 6d).

THIS BOOK, granting that an adult mind is apt to recast its memories, must be accepted as truthful. Its author, aged about twelve, entered a small Irish boarding school exclusively for boys meaning to join the Order that governed it. If judged unfit to do so, they could be dismissed without warning or explanation. He, however, aged eighteen, was accepted as a novice. After a year of this and six of study, he was due for ordination, but within five days of it was told he should never be a priest. No explanation could be obtained; no petitions were listened to: unordained, life within the Order would have been impossible: he left, to confront a world of which he knew nothing.

We must, therefore, seek for hints, unconsciously given, of why all this happened. But first, we are not told why the boy was sent to a school whose pupils were ear-marked as future members of one or any Order. We admit that an inexperienced novice may become convinced that the unknown "world" is a desperately wicked place; and also, that one who leaves an Order is doubly to be despaired of. Neither theology nor common sense can quite exorcise this murky myth, though they may create a deep and abiding interior conflict. It is natural too that in the easily over-heated air of the noviciate an adolescent feels alternating moods of uplifted piety and nerves, and that in the more easy-going environment that follows it he should wonder at times if he had really *meant* the soaring aspirations of his prayers. There was, of course, in the author, along with the hard Irish core a layer of emotionalism: he became aware of the haunting excitement of romantic music; was enthralled by ancient Irish folklore (but also, by the modern exponents of the revival): he was conscious that his need for friendship was not satisfied by an "artificial charity." He was intellectually inquisitive, and while he notes that he never was refused a book he asked for, he cannily refrained from asking for too many off the "beaten track"; here is already a certain schism between his intelligence and the mental "pattern" dictated by authority or convention. Johannes Jørgensen's autobiography, out of the "hundreds of books" he read, thrilled him by its record of doubts, disillusionments and search, ending with peace found in Umbria: Rudolf Allers' *Psychology of Character* made him realize the differences in human make-up. We suggest that he read too many books really to assimilate much: the "pattern" was needed for one who had had no liberal education: foundations must be ensured provided the mind does not become imprisoned, indeed petrified, within them. A crisis came when, as a young "philosopher," he was told to defend publicly the know-

ability of the non-ego. He held that he was expected to *prove* it syllogistically, and, that it could not be so proved. So he decided it was a "game" and that he "had better play it." He produced the "stock arguments" and answered the objections (also "stock") which had been surreptitiously given him beforehand. The "conflict" is by now quite evident. After this, he found dogma "dull": we surmise that its history was inadequately shown, though he had long ago been taken on "conducted tours" through the whole (*sic!*) of the Scriptures. Moral theology seemed to provide another clash. Mr. MacEoin thinks that there is a residuum of Jansenism in Ireland; that this harmonizes with the doctrine of St. Alphonsus (but not with his behaviour), and that adherence to a "tradition" no more applicable is what demands the hell-fire sermons that so enchant (we remember) schoolboys. None the less, he reached (as we said) the retreat immediately preceding ordination when the bolt fell from the blue. Our purely personal impression is that the author would have been happy neither as a priest nor a religious. He did not intend to be unorthodox, or disloyal: his book is clever, but we have no sense of charity on this side or on that: it does not communicate those primary gifts of the Spirit—love, joy, or peace. As for the final blow, a recent book, *Black Popes*, reminds us that the exercise of spiritual authority which is not "fatherly," or keeps its motives secret, is indefensible. It is, in fact, bound to appear both cruel and unjust, and, no wonder, is one of the chief causes of anti-clericalism.

The Surprise of Cremona, by Edith Templeton (Eyre and Spottiswoode 18s).

MRS. TEMPLETON takes us with her to Cremona, Parma, Mantua, Ravenna, Urbino and Arezzo. Her recognition of the essential "culture" of the Italian makes us hope much from her book, but, as we proceed, we are disappointed. Her comments often suggest a desire to be unconventional—be original, by all means, but don't *try* to be! A slightly mordant humour is an asset; but it must do no more than play on the surface of what is deep and reverent. At times we doubt if those depths exist for her. Her easy contempt for Aeneas makes her miss the majesty and mystery of the *Aeneid*: she finds Pilate her favourite character in the New Testament—not that she knows his history too well. And we cannot help thinking that if her old guide at Mantua crossed herself when the name of Gonzaga was mentioned, it was because of St. Aloysius of whom Mrs. Templeton naturally knows nothing, any more than of St. Omobono at Cremona. Even the tragic Duke Vespasian Gonzaga is treated trivially. We may

doubt whether St. Ignatius wrote "Exercitiae"; but it is not such details, nor even Mrs. Templeton's rather wearisome way of seeing things as sausage-shaped or coloured—too much of these sausages!—that we regret, but her missing of so fine an opportunity.

Prosatori Minori del Trecento. Religious Writings of the Fourteenth Century (in Italian). (Riccardo Ricciardi, Milan, Lire 5000).

THIS VOLUME on the spiritual writings of "the Trecento" is, in spite of its 1,200 pages, a mere sample of a vast work of over eighty volumes. These will cover the history of Italian literature from its origins in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to our day and make the texts of the great works accessible. The formidable venture is well on its way and judging by the form and contents of this volume it must command our admiration. Of paper, printing and production one can only say that all conforms with the best Italian standards. Higher praise is hardly possible.

The selection before us, edited by Monsignor G. De Luca, portrays the religious beliefs and spiritual aspirations of fourteenth-century Italy and gains in effectiveness by juxtaposing famous writers with their obscure contemporaries and contrasting original works with popular adaptations from earlier sources, in versions which often express a vitality and freshness missing in the originals. Part I is made up of letters, sermons, conferences on religious rule and accounts of saints and martyrs. Part II offers various cycles of legend which range with playful familiarity over the indefinable borderland of fact and fancy and, of course, abound in graces and wonders. The charm of it all is that we are transported into a climate so remote from our own, in which Faith transfigures life and becomes the breath of our nostrils as we inhale the fragrance of medieval Siena, Lucca, Pisa and Arezzo and share the riches of souls attuned to the supernatural and lapped in love.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary. A Story of Twenty-four Years, by Nesta de Robeck (Bruce \$3).

MISS DE ROBECK'S WORK is well known for its scholarship, sensitive treatment of tradition, and sober piety. This book is in every way satisfying. Probably opinions will for ever differ about the character of Conrad of Marburg, appointed the Saint's confessor; and the behaviour of her relatives after her husband's death may remain to some degree enigmatic. But we can leave all that behind and the entangled history of her times—even the amazing fact that there were those who wished her to marry Frederick II, *Stupor Mundi*, and he

himself is said to have placed his crown on her dead body "since he could not crown her Empress." What survives is the exquisitely sweet influence of her character, and the brief idyll of her married life and her mother's-love for her three children. We pray for the Hungary that she loved so dearly and for all parts of her adopted Germany and its future, and our own country and its Queen who has inherited the name of "the dear Elizabeth"—for after all, the first Elizabeth of England would never have so been called had it not been for the young princess who endeared that name to every part of Europe. The bibliography is very rich and the index seemingly exhaustive. A book to be treasured, along with that *Life of St. Clare* by the same authoress.

The Manner is Ordinary, by John LaFarge, S.J. (Harcourt Brace \$4.75).

ALTHOUGH FR. LAFARGE has been writing for America for over twenty-five years, he is best known throughout the United States for his work in connection with the racial question. He stands in relation to the Catholic Church there in a way analagous to the relationship between members of the Oxford Movement and the English Catholic Church. The background from which he proceeds is not the usual one of priests, regular or secular, a fact which makes his views on American Catholic life more objective and valuable. In his youth he appears to have known most of the distinguished American non-Catholics of his day and his education was completed at Harvard. Even Fr. LaFarge's ecclesiastical studies were conducted in an uncommon way. His first intention was to become a diocesan priest, and with that in mind he took up his studies at Innsbruck. Before he had finished there his outlook altered, and although he was ordained in Innsbruck he made it clear to his Bishop that he wished to join the Society of Jesus. Such a recruit could only be a very valuable one and Fr. LaFarge recounts with some amusement how horrified his Dominican friends were when he revealed his intentions to them. The rest of Fr. LaFarge's story is a fascinating commentary on American Catholic life as seen through the eyes of one who greatly influenced it without being a typical product of its educational system. It is his work for the American Negroes that impresses the reader of his autobiography most, and his views on the famous Scottsboro case should do much to correct the extraordinary nonsense talked about it over here. Mr. LaFarge was delighted to inform Henry James that his son still remained charming despite his stern work at Innsbruck. The charm runs through the book leaving the impression that however ordinary the manner may be the writer is a most extraordinary person.

Don Camillo's Dilemma, by Giovanni Guareschi (Gollancz 10s 6d).

THIS BOOK RUNS TRUE TO FORMULA, and is as delicious as its predecessors and even more inventive. Yet at times a literal translation (by Frances Frenaye) may jar by its very excellence on northern nerves, especially when the Name of Our Lord is used. Also, by now we may feel too acutely the conflict between Communism and Christianity to be able to accept the gentle caricature of both mayor and parish-priest without reflection on the underlying tragedy. Not that chaff may not be the best way of deflating bombastic atheism, or again, of revealing how deep the roots of the Faith have struck into the Italian soul. But we doubt if the author can go on using his formula through very many more Camillo books. The little angels are drawn as enchantingly as ever, with, perhaps, rather more sophistication.

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